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THINKERS

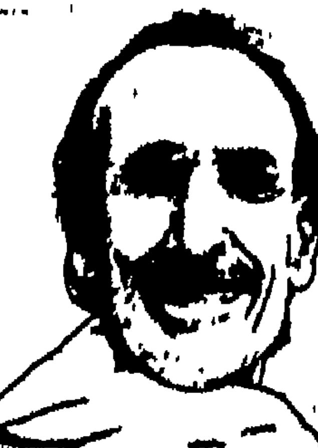





OF

MODERN INDIA

22 CHITTARANJAN DAS

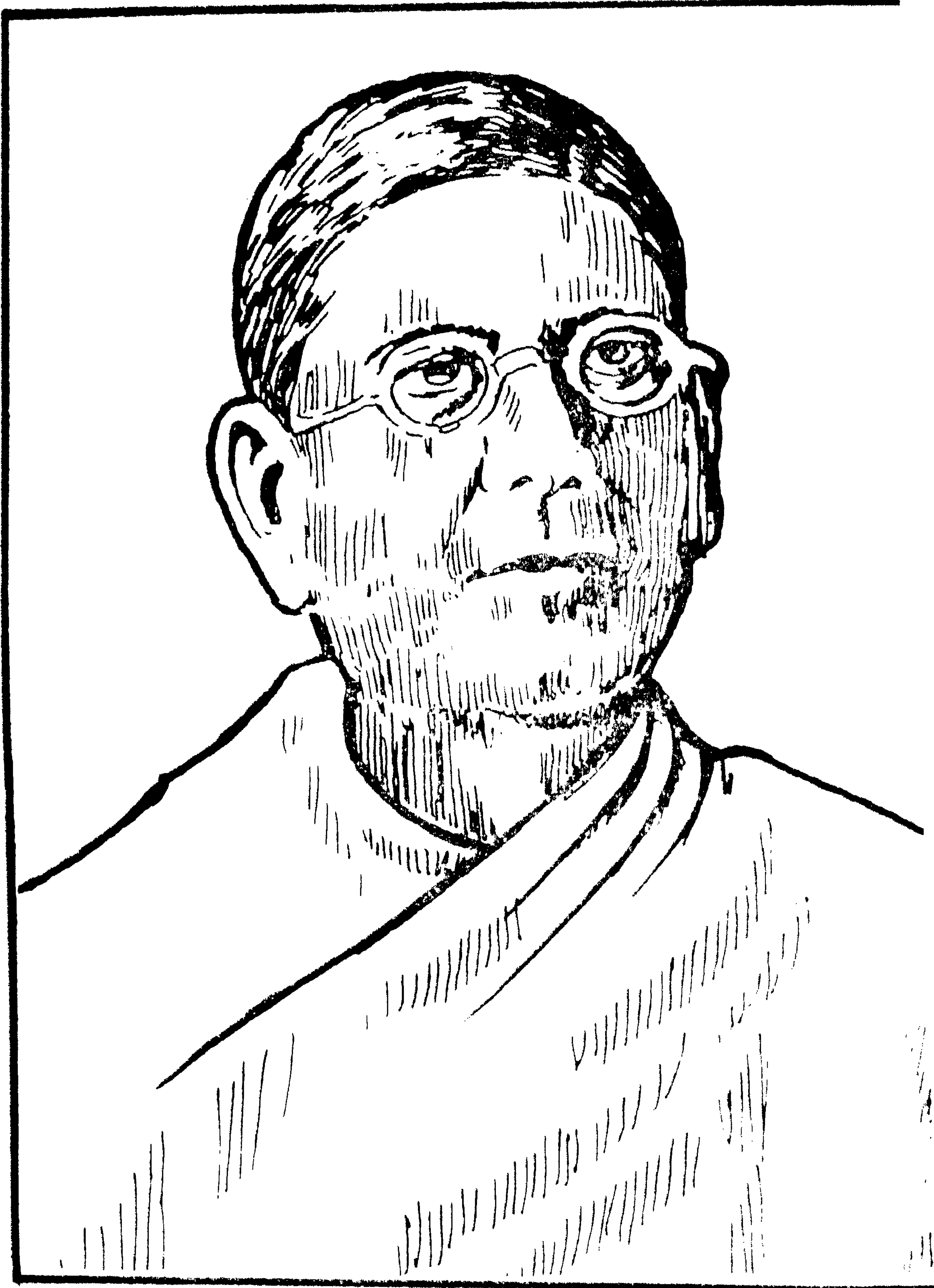




EDITED BY
VERINDER GROVER

POLITICAL THINKERS OF MODERN INDIA

Volume Twenty-Two

CHITTARANJAN DAS



Chittaranjan Das

POLITICAL THINKERS OF MODERN INDIA

VOLUME TWENTY-TWO

CHITTARANJAN DAS

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PREFACE

Chittaranjan Das was born on 5 November, 1870, in Calcutta. He belonged to an upper middle class Vaidya family of Telirbagh, Vikrampur, in Dacca district. His father, Bhuban Mohan Das, was a reputed solicitor of the Calcutta High Court. Chittaranjan's patriotic ideas were greatly influenced by his father.

Chittaranjan received his early education at the London Missionary Society's Institution at Bhowanipur (Calcutta). Later, he passed the Entrance Examination in 1885 as a private candidate. He graduated from Presidency College in 1890 and went to England to join the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1894. The same year he returned to India and started his practice as a barrister. In 1897 Chittaranjan married Basanti Devi, daughter of Baradanath Haldar, Dewan of Bijni State in Assam.

Chittaranjan reached eminence as a barrister in some of the important cases that he had handled. In 1907 he appeared as the defence lawyer of Brahmabhandhav Upadhyaya and Bhupendranath Dutta who were prosecuted for sedition. However, the turning point in his career came next year when he was called upon to appear on behalf of Aurobindo Ghose in the Alipore Bomb Case. It redounds to the credit of Chittaranjan that he got Aurobindo acquitted with brilliant handling of the case. Thumping success in the Alipore Bomb Case brought Chittaranjan to the forefront of the professional and the political platform.

Though Chittaranjan as a college student was politically alert and had intense patriotic feelings yet it was not before 1917 that he came to the forefront of nationalist politics. In the course of eight years (1917-1925) he rose to countrywide fame by virtue of his ardent patriotism and oratorial power. In addition, Chittaranjan made his mark as a poet, an essayist, a journalist and a jurist.

Chittaranjan, whose life is a landmark in the history of India's struggle for freedom, passed away on 16 June, 1925, at Darjeeling at the age of 55.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I consists of writings, speeches and addresses delivered by Chittaranjan and Part II consists of articles assessing the place that Chittaranjan occupied as one of the national leaders of India.

This book is a systematic piecing together of articles contributed by scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute. I owe special thanks to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Socialist India*, *Swarajya*, *Modern Review*, *Political and Economic Review*, *Young India*, *Indian Political Science Review*, *Gandhi Marg* and *Indian Journal of Political Science* from which I have drawn freely. I express my deep sense of appreciation to all the contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their co-operation to me.

New Delhi VERINDER GROVER

CHRONOLOGY

1870 November 5th : Born in Calcutta, in a house in Pataldanga Street.
Educated at the L.M.S. Institution, Bhowanipur and the Presidency College, Calcutta.

1890 : Graduated from the Presidency College and proceeded to England the same year.

1891 : Sat for the Indian Civil Service and failed.

1892 : Was called to the Bar from the Middle Temple.

1893 : Returned to India, and enrolled as a Barrister in the Calcutta High Court.

1895 : *Malancha* published.

1897 December 3rd : Married the daughter of Mr. Barada N. Haldar.

1906 June 19th : Went through the Insolvency Court.
December : Joined the Congress for the first time as a Delegate.

1907-8 : The Khururia Zemindari case.
Trial of Brahmobandhab Upodhaya.
Trial of Bipin Ch. Pal.

1908 June 19th December : The defence of Aurobindo Ghose and other Manicktolla Bomb Conspirators.

1911 : Defended the accused in the Dacca Conspiracy Case.

1913 May 14th : Became a discharged insolvent by paying all his and his father's debts.
Published the *Sagar Sanjit* (*The Song of the Sea*).

1914 July : Chittaranjan's father died at Purulia.
Accepted the Dumraon brief on behalf of Keso Prosad Singh, a remote reversioner of the "gadi".

1917 : President of the Bengal Provincial Conference, Bhowanipur.

1918 : Speech at the Town Hall meeting condemning the Defence of India Act.

1919 : Member of the Non-Official Jallianwalla Bagh Enquiry Committee.
First advocacy of obstruction in the Amritsar Congress.
At a meeting in the Calcutta Maidan, supported Mahatma Gandhi's Passive Resistance Movement (Satyagraha) as a protest against the Rowlatt Act.

1920 March : Mahatma Gandhi declared Non-co-operation with Government and the Europeans.

1920 September : Opposed the Non-co-operation programme of Mahatma Gandhi in the Special Congress at Calcutta, held under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai.

1920 December 4th : Accepted the Non-co-operation programme in the Congress at Nagpur, held under the presidency of Mr. Vijayaraghava Chariar.

1921 January : Suspended practice at the Bar.
Political tour in Eastern Bengal and Assam.
Establishment of a "National University" at Dacca. Ordered to refrain from entering Mymensingh by the District Magistrate. Revocation of the prohibition order. Visit to Mymensingh and Tangail. Visit to Habiganj, Maulvi Bazar, Sylhet, Comilla, Chittagong, etc.
Attended the Barisal Conference as a delegate.

1921 November 25th : Volunteer Corps declared an illegal association.
The ban on public meetings.
Lord Reading on arriving in Calcutta, approved of the repressive measures taken by the Bengal Government.

1921 November 27th : The Congress Committee decided to disobey the order of the Government regarding the Volunteer Corps and public meetings.

1921 November 28th : The Khilafat Committee accepted the above decision of the Congress Committee.
C.R. Das recognized as Dictator by the Congress and Khilafat organisations in Bengal.
As Dictator C.R. Das issued several manifestoes and called for 10 lakhs of volunteers.
The Government declared these manifestoes as well as the call for volunteers illegal.

1921 November 30th : At the St. Andrew's Dinner in Calcutta Lord Ronaldshay, then Governor of Bengal, referred to Das in most eulogistic terms, at the same time holding out a threat.

1921 December 6th : A number of volunteers, including C.R. Das's son, were sent to Burrabazar and were arrested.

1921 December 7th : Along with other volunteers, C.R. Das's wife, sister and other ladies were arrested, but immediately released.

1921 December 10th : C.R. Das arrested under Sec. 17 B. Criminal Law Amendment Act.

1921 December 25th : C.R. Das, President-elect of the Congress, could not preside over its annual session held at Ahmedabad as he was then an under-trial prisoner. Hakim Ajmal Khan of Delhi took his place.
Visit of the Prince of Wales to Calcutta and "hartal" (strike) observed on the day of his arrival.

1922 : Congress Civil Disobedience Committee reported that the time was not ripe.

1922 January 6th : C.R. Das sentenced to six months' imprisonment.
Reading-Malaviya negotiations for a Round Table Conference. C.R. Das's consent to Malaviya's proposal subject to Mahatma Gandhi's approval.

1922 July : Address presented to Das, on his release, at Mirzapur Park.

1922 December : Presided over the Congress at Gaya and founded the Swaraj Party.

1923 September : Found *Forward.*
Council entry resolution accepted in the special session of the Congress at Delhi.

1923 December : Council entry resolution adopted by the Cocanada Congress held under the presidency of Maulana Mohamed Ali.
Entry of the Swarajists into the Council. Defeats of prominent Liberals like Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and Mr. S.R. Das.
Swarajists return in the general election as the strongest single party in the Bengal Council.
C.R. Das invited by Lord Lytton to form a ministry; his refusal.
Coalition with Independents.
Hindu-Moslem Pact causing serious dissatisfaction among various sections of the community.
Presided over the All India Trade Union Congress at Lahore.

1924 January : Declined to accept Lord Lytton's offer of Ministry.
Capture of the Calcutta Corporation by the Swarajists.
C.R. Das elected the first Mayor of Calcutta.

1924 March 24th : At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council a motion was put to the effect that the demand for Rs. 2,20000 under the head 22 E (Bengal Budget for 1925-26 for Ministers' salaries) be refused. Sixty-three members

supported the motion: sixty-two opposed.

1924 April : Serajgunge Conference and Gopi Nath Shah resolution.
C.R. Das appointed a Committee on behalf of the Congress to enquire into Tarakeswar affairs.
"Satyagraha" declared at Tarakeswar.
C.R. Das's compromise with Satish Giri, the Mohunt of that shrine.
Presided over the fourth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Calcutta.

1924 December : Attended the ordinary session of the Congress held at Belgium under the presidency of Mahatma Gandhi.

1925 March : Reading-Birkenhead-Das conversations.
At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council, a motion was put to the effect that the demand of Rs. 1,28000 under head 22 E (Bengal Budget for 1926-27 for Ministers' salaries for 1926-27) be refused. Sixty-nine members supported the motion, sixty-three opposed.
Made over his property to a trust for the service of the country.

1925 March 30th : Issued manifesto repudiating violence and revolutionary activities.

1925 April 4th : Issued second manifesto on repression-revolutionary activities.

1925 May 2nd : Faridpore Conference offer of honourable co-operation in his Presidential Address.

1925 May 16th : Reached Darjeeling.

1925 June 16th : Died at Darjeeling at 5.15 p.m.

PART I

1

INDIA FOR INDIANS*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

1. SPEECH AT THE HINDU-MAHOMEDAN MASS MEETING CALCUTTA**

The difficulty is the European Association. We are used to the tricks of the European Association. In the days of the Ilbert Bill Agitation, we saw what the Anglo-Indians can do. But then, public opinion had hardly been born in this country. Today, again, when the British Government has recognised the policy of self-government we hear the same uproar. These people who come here to make money, who come here penniless and when they retire, take away thousands and thousands—these people pretend to talk in the name of India when they say that these gentlemen, these honoured gentlemen should not be released because they knew that if they are released, they will strengthen the party which seeks Self-Government, because they know that when Mr. Mahomed Ali comes out, when Babu Sham Sunder Chakravarty comes out, they will fight shoulder to shoulder for the cause of Self-Government in this country. And if Self-government is granted what about the policy of these merchants ? If Self-Government is granted the authority of Magistrates and Collectors

*Speeches of Chittaranjan Das on Home Rule.

**Presidential address at the Hindu-Mahomedan Mass Meeting held at Calcutta in October 1917 to protest against the internment of Messrs, Mahomad Ali and Shakut Ali.

in every district will be lessened—and then what would happen to these gentlemen who write letters to Collectors saying,—my dear so and so, will you see this done and will you see that done ? It is a notorious fact that in this country and I have heared complaints from many Indian Merchants engaged in the coal trade that they cannot get waggons at a time when English merchants are fully supplied with waggons. These are the advantages which they get by this country being ruled not by the people of this country but by a bureaucracy. That really is the reason of this Anglo-Indian agitation.

I must refer to the speeches made by these knights of Anglo-India against the interests of this country and against the policy of Self-Government. I will first of all refer to the foolish speech of Arden Wood. This gentleman is reported to have said : "If racial feeling is to be dominant in Indian politics the time will come, when we, the British will either have to leave India or reconquer it." Now, gentlemen, it is difficult to take this speech seriously. They may leave India if they find it unprofitable to stay in India. They may stay in India if they find it profitable to do so but the tall talk of reconquering India is a comical statement. It reminds me of the bravery of the valiant Pistol and Corporal Nymph. If this gentleman does not know, he ought to know that India was never conquered. India was won by love and won by promise of good government. India was never conquered and God willing, it will never be conquered for all time to come. India will impress her ideal, her civilization, and her culture upon the whole world. The work has commenced today. It will go on increasing till the world will listen to the message of India.

Some of the other speakers made very angry speeches. One gentleman is reported to have said that if there is a government by the people and for the people then there will be no security for life and "prosperity". Mark the word prosperity. I do not know whether the printer's devil is responsible for this but if he is, this devil has got a perfect knowledge of the internal affairs. The apprehension of this speaker is that if there is Self-Government, there will be no security or prosperity. Whose prosperity may we ask ? Is it the prosperity of India, is it the prosperity of the teeming millions of our country or is it the prosperity of Sir Archy Birkmyre ? Whose prosperity ? If the granting of Home Rule to this country means the poverty of Sir Archy Birkmyre, let it be so,

but still Self-Government must be granted. India does not live for Sir Archy Birkmyre or the petty traders who come here and rob us of our money. India lives for herself—she has lived for herself for centuries and she will live in herself and for herself for all time to come. There is another statement made by this angry speaker, which takes my breath away. He says that this agitation of the European Association is to assert the rights of the British in India. The rights of the British in India ! These little-minded traders who at a time when the Government enjoins a calm atmosphere hold a meeting and proceed straight away to denounce the whole country; and abuse the people and all the ideals for which they fight and in which they live and move and have their being—these men claim the right to represent the British. The British indeed ! When His Majesty's ministers say that there should be Home Rule, there should be Self-Government, that the people of this country should be granted equal partnership with the people of England in the Empire, who are these traders who claim to represent British interests in India ? Gentlemen, I will not take you through the many comical statements made by this entertaining band of players, Jones-Birkmyre Company. They are used to many tricks. I will refer to some of the 'Statesman' newspaper, which used to pose as the Friend of India at one time. I think it has given up all that pretence now. This "Statesman" came out one day with a furious article on the Extremists of Bengal and praised the Moderates and the next day it said that there did not seem to be any difference between the Extremists and the Moderates. Well, the reason for that is quite clear. There is in fact, no difference. This distinction was invented by the "Statesman" newspaper some years ago. We can frankly tell the Anglo-Indian community that there are no Extremists among us, no Moderates. The Hindus and Mahomedans, of Bengal are all Nationalists—they are neither Extremists nor Moderates. I may tell you who are the Extremists. It is those Anglo-Indian Agitators who are the worst Extremists. You talk of a calm atmosphere ! Who broke that calm ? It is you Anglo-Indian agitators. It is Sir Hugh Bray, it is the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, it is the speakers who spoke at the meeting of the European Association. These people broke the calm. I ask them to consider the position and beware. They days of the Ilbert Bill agitation have gone by. These are the days of rising Democracy in this country. We will no longer tolerate that

sort of vapourings, that kind of abuse. If, inspite of that, they persist in their wicked agitation, we shall soon know-how to deal with them. We are fighting in the best interests of the Empire, we are fighting for the ideal expressed by the King's ministers, we are fighting for carrying out that very policy which has been declared in England by His Majesty's ministers, and by His Excellency the Viceroy in this country If you dare stand against that, we will know-how to deal with you. Be assured, we Indians do not deny your legitimate share whatever may be the extent of that share in the Government of this country. We know what you mean when you say that Self-Government is no good, because Self-Government would be against the interests of the teeming millions of India. We know the hollowness of that hypocricy. But we can tell these gentlemen, so far as I am concerned, at any rate, I am perfectly clear,—that we shall accept no Self-Government, no Home Rule unless it recognises and includes within it the teeming millions of India. When I ask for Home Rule, for Self-Government, I am not asking for another bureaucracy, another oligarchy in the place of the bureaucracy that there is at present. In my opinion, bureaucracy is bureaucracy, be that bureaucracy of Englishmen or of Anglo-Indians or of Indians. We want no bureaucracy, we want Home Rule, we want Self-Government by the people and for the people. We want Self-Government in which every individual of this country, be he the poorest ryot or the richest zemindar will have his legitimate share. Every individual must have some voice. We want Home Rule broad based on the will of the people of India. Now gentlemen, this is our objective. Do they still say or can they, in reason, say, that we are not asking Home Rule on behalf and in the interests of the teeming millions of India ? If they say we have got no right to ask for it in their interest, my answer is we have a thousand times greater right to ask for them than you who never know them or care for them. India has always been tolerant towards those people, whatever their religious creed or faith may be, who have made India their Home—every one of them is my brother and I embrace him with open arms. The history of India has made it abundantly clear. We have the Parsis in India. They adopted India as their home and today we embrace them as our brothers. We have had hosts of Mahomedan invaders who came to this country as conquerors but they made this country their home and today we embrace them with open arms. If these

Anglo-Indians want to make India their home, let them do so and we will work hand in hand with them in the interest of the Indian Empire. But if they come here to make money and all their interests, it is how best to make it. I say they are no friends of India, they have got no right to call themselves Indians, they have got no legitimate right to oppose the granting of self-good to the people of India. I say to them. "Come here if you want. Make money if you can. Go away in peace if you want to do so."

I said that our difficulty is the mischievous working of the European association. Let us be united, gentlemen. Let us assist the Government against this selfish and unreal agitation. I feel sure the victory is ours.

2. SPEECH AT THE PUBLIC MEETING—MYMENSINGH*

This is my first visit to Mymensingh. Before I arrived here, I really did not know that I had so many friends amongst you. My friend Mr. Guha has referred to my unselfish activities. I am sure I do not deserve that praise. But this I will claim for myslf that whenever the interest of the country required my services, I have never lagged behind. I might not have always adopted the right course—I might have been wrong, every one of us is often wrong but I have always honestly tried to place the interest of the country above all considerations. With me work for my country is not imitation of European politics. It is part of my religion. It is part and parcel of all the idealism of my life. I find in the conception of my country the expression also of divinity. With me nationality is no mere political conception, borrowed from the philosophy of the west. With me a nation has to grow because a nation must grow. God's universe teems with varieties of life. Every nation is one unit of such life. Every nation must grow to the evolution of life. The nation to which I belong must also grow, only we must help in its growth. I value this principle of nationality as I value the principle of morality and religion. The service of country and nationality is service of humanity. Service

*A large meeting of the people of Mymensingh was held in October 1917 at the Surjakanta Hall, under the presidency of Babu Anathbandhu Guha to formulate a scheme of responsible Government for India, when Mr. C. R. Das delivered the above speech.

of humanity is worship of God.

Bengal has a Message to Deliver

To-night I wish to say a few words to you about the present political situation in our country. Do not image gentlemen, that your political situation is detached from other matters which belong to our country. Political activity is part and parcel of your culture; it is the practice of your patriotism; it is the expression of your religion. I never believe in water-tight compartments of human culture. There are people of this country, who try to divide the whole field on human life into so many compartments or divisions. With them politics is one thing, religion, education—these things have nothing to do with politics. With them religion is a different branch altogether. Neither politics nor education has anything to do with it. They forget that human soul is one, they forget that the individuality of human beings is one complex whole covering many activities. As the individual soul is one so the national soul is one. I do not desire to deal with the political situation of today in any narrow spirit or in a spirit which is borrowed from the politics of Europe,—much as I venerate European culture, much as I love and much as I acknowledge my indebtedness to the education which I had in Europe, I cannot foreget that Bengal stands for something higher than that. I cannot forget that our nationality must not rest content with borrowing things from European politics—and I repeat what I said elsewhere, that Bengal has a message to give to the world. When you will find that infant nationality has grown and we have developed according to our light, our country will deliver that message and the world will listen.

Predominant note in the Political Situation

Now, gentlemen, what is the predominant note in the political situation of today. I refer to the many attempts which are being made to introduce in this country some kind of Self-Government. Some people call it Self-Government, others call it Home-Rule, others again Swaraj—but we need not quarrel with words, they all mean the same thing. I would much rather you should give your attention to the thing itself than the name with which you want to call that thing. Now, what is it which is necessary in the interest of our race—not only in the interest of our race (but in the interest

of the world at large)—for no race can have its self-interest fulfilled in the highest degree without at the same time contributing to the interest of the empire and of the human race. So I ask you to consider what is necessary for you to have by way of self-Government. It is abundantly clear that the highest authorities in England have oome to the conclusion—our politicians and many other persons who have devoted their time and energy to the cause of the country have also come to the conclusion—that we must have some form of Government which may be described as Government by the people and for the people.

What Our Politics Consists in

Now gentlemen, I desire to point out one thing clearly here. It has been said by Anglo-Indian newspapers and Anglo-Indian agitators that our politics consists in abusing the Government. Well, I deny that charge in toto. Our politics consists in this that we want some kind of Government which may be described as responsible Government, according to the principles of constitutional law. We want some sort of Government in which the Government officials will be responsible to the people whom they govern. We have no quarrel with individuals. If a civilian official does some wrong in some place we feel we have to criticise his actions. But my objection will not be met by replacing the whole of the Civil Service of Bengalees. My quarrel is not with individuals, my quarrel is with the system—it is an evil system. It might have been necessary at one time. It has done its work and it is no longer necessary. It hampers our growth at the present moment—anything which stands against our growing nationality. I have no hesitation in describing that as an evil. The time has come when this system should be cast away as a 'creed outworn.'

What Kind of Government We Want

Gentlemen, if you have once made up your mind that you want some kind of Government which will be rssponsible to the people, the next point to consider will be, what kind of Government is it that you want. We cannot forget that we live in the midst of an empire, the largest and the most glorious empire in the history of the human race. We cannot forget that our interests are bound up intimately with the interest of England. We cannot forget that our interests are also bound up with the interest of Australia and South Africa. All of us live

and grow under the sway of the same Empire. If you consider the geographical magnitude of this Empire, the different races, the different creeds, the different cultures, the different religions which this empire represents, you will find that there is a glorious opportunity for federating so many human races, with so many distinct interests, distinct nationalities, different cultures, different religions and in that way for contributing to the ultimate federation of the wild human race. That is the philosophy of nationalism today. Therefore, first of all, we must get a government which will be autonomous in so far as it will be government by the people and for the people. The different provincial governments are to be connected together by some sort of central government and then again that central government is to be connected up with the different parts of the vast empire. That is the sort of Government to which the time has come for which to make a definite scheme.

THE ENUNCIATION OF POLICY

The proclamation of 1858, impliedly promised some such free autonomous representative government. Years rolled by, we passed through many changes, we had many different promises had never been redeemed. The other day, His Majesty the King-Emperor came to this country and from his lips, we had the message of hope. Though we have been disappointed over and over again, the time has come when these promises must be redeemed. In connection with the political situation of the present moment. I ask you to consider first the statement of the Secretary of State for India, which was published on the 20th August last (1917). I invite your particular attention to the words of that statement. I will read out to you certain portions which are significant of what is to come.

> "The policy of His Majesty's Government, etc. etc., is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India, as an integral part of the British Empire, etc. etc."

I draw your particular attention to the words "Progressive

realixation of responsible government in India, as an integral part of the British Empire." That is the ideal which the Secretary of State has sketched out. What is the deduction from this ? What is it that we have got to hope for from this statement ? It is this : that there will be several representative institutions and that these institutions will be responsible institutions and that these institutions will form the "Government of India, which will be an integral part of the British Empire. Now, what does that means. It means that there should be autonomous governments in every province that these provincial governments are to be responsible and autonomous, that is to say, responsible not to the Government of India, not to anytning which is above them, but to the people, the electors who would elect the representatives to these autonomous legislative bodies. That is the doctrine of responsible self-Government as it is understood in politics and in constitutional law. Now, therefore, you get these provincial governments which are responsible to the people, i.e., the members being elected by the people and you get these autonomous governments connected with the Government of India and again the Government of India connected with the Empire. How that connection will be served has been described by certain political thinkers in England but I do not desire to deal with it because before it is declared as the policy of Government, we have no right to take those utterances as part of any statement by the Government. Having sketched out this ideal the Secretary of States goes on to say : "*They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, etc. etc.*"

Therefore, gentlemen, you get two things perfectly distinct in this statement and I appeal to you that you should not lose sight of these two, viz., the ideal of responsible government which will be representative in the highest sense of the word and which will be connected with the empire and secondly, some steps should be taken immediately in that direction. That is the declaration of policy made by His Majesty's Government. We have, therefore, a right to expect that some definite steps will be taken soon towards the practical attainment of that ideal.

THE VICEROY ON SELF-GOVERNMENT

The next thing to which I wish to refer is the speech of His

Excellency the Victory, delivered on the 5th of September. I will only refer to that part of it which deals with this ideal of Self-Government. His Excellency says :

"I now turn to the third task, viz., constitutional reforms. At the very first Executive Council, which I held as Viceroy and Governor-General, I propounded two-questions to my Council : (1) What is the goal of British Rule in India? (2) What are the steps on the road to that goal? We came to the conclusion which, I trust most Hon. Members will agree, was inevitable, that the endowment of British India, as an integral part of the British Empire, with Self-Government was the goal of British Rule, and His Majesty's Government have not put forward in precise terms their policy, which we may say that we as the Government of India regard in substance as practically indistinguishable from that which we put forward, etc. etc."

Having said what the goal is, His Excellency proceeds to say that the first road to that goal is in the domain of local Self-Government, village, rural, town or municipal.

The second road is in the domain of more responsible employment of Indians under the Government. Referring to the third, His Excellency says—

"We come now to our third road, which lay in the domain of Legislative Councils. As Hon. Members will readily appreciate, there is in subject on which so much difference of opinion resists, and with regard to which greater need is required for careful investigation and sober decision. I may say frankly that we, as the Government of India, recognise fully that an advance must be made on this road simultaneously, with the advances on the other two, etc. etc."

I draw your attention to this. We, therefore, have got the right to hope that not only will this work of Local Self-Government commence but simultaneously, along with that, work in the other two domains must also commence. His Excellency says—

"And His Majesty's Government, in connection with the goal which they have outlined in their announcement have divided that substantial steps in the direction of the goal they define

should be taken as soon as possible."

I say, therefore, gentlemen, that we have got a right to expect that in the near future some substantial steps should be taken for granting to the people of this country that government which is responsible, which is representative and which is an integral part of the British Empire.

How Difficulties Began

After these declarations were made, difficulties began. On the one hand, it filled us with hope that many of us, I must confess, did not examine this statement minutely and critically and had only a vague impression as to what was going to be done and were unduly suspicious, but on the whole, it has made us hope for the realization of that which we have been fighting for, for the last 50 years. On the other hand, it gave rise to despir in other people. I would ask you to mark the dates. The statement of the Secretary of State was made on the 20th of August. On the 13th of September the memoral pronouncement was made by His Excellency the Viceroy. On the 20th September, Sir Hugh Bray and Mr. Hogg spoke in the Indian Legislative Council; and they at once made it clear that it was nonsense to think of any kind of Self-Government so far as India is concerned. I ask you to note that fact because I shall ask you to consider what followed, in the light of that interesting event which took place on the 20th September. I am referring to the speeches made by Sir Hugh Bray and Mr. Hogg. Now, Sir Hugh Bray, apart from criticising the political activities of people of this country—I will not retaliate by abuse for abuse—made it perfectly clear by saying this : "It is not we who wanted a change in the method of Government." So, Sir Hugh Bray does not want a change in the method of Government. The European Association, 6 days after, declared that they did not want a change in the method of Government in this country.

Is it a Wild Inference ?

Is it a wild inference to draw from these two significant events that these people did not want a change in the method of Government in this country, because they know the present system of Government is the most profitable to them ? If any one draws

that inference, is to be characterised as a violent speker ? I say the dates and the speeches speak for themselves. It is idle to say afterwards "we were not against changes, we wanted our interest to be safeguarded." The fact is they did not want a change and why should they ? If I had been an Anglo-Indian merchant, I should not have wanted a change. They say that they have sunk capital in this country. I do not know the exact textent of that capital. My impression is—speak from my impression and I am subject to correction, but I think I am right—that for whatever capital they invested, they have taken out a great deal more in the shape of profits. But granting that they have sunk capital in this country, what right does it give them to dictate to the people of this country that the method of this particular Government is not to be changed. British capital has been invested in America, France and Germany. Does any British Merchant ever dream that they have got the right to dictate to the American, French, or German Government about the method of their particular Government ? Why is it that the sinking of capital should have such a different effect on the soil of this country ? The reason is perfectly clear. In America, they would not stand such nonsense, in France they will be asked to keep quiet. But it is only in this country that these merchants who have sunk capital—I am assuming that they have and that it still remains unrealised—can put forward the claim that the Government of this country should be run in their interest and not in the interest of the people of India. They see the absurdity of their position and because they see the utter absurdity of this illogical and extravagant claim which they make in furtherance of their self-interest they have to say that they are the representatives of India. They say : "We are speaking not only on our behalf but on behalf of the teeming millions of this country. You are professional agitators," I do not understand what they mean by "professional agitators"—no-body pays me or Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea or any of my friends for making speeches. However, what they mean is this : that the speakers belong to a particular professions ? I happen to belong to law. Many of my friends who have to make speeches belong to the medical profession or some other professions. But these speakers of the European Association also belong to some profession or trade. Sir Archy Birkmyre has also his trade to play, the other merchants I suppose make their profits, Mr. Jones

of the "Statesman" gets his wages—and even the fire-eater of the Lamartinaire College must draw his pay. Mr. Pugh I do not think forgets to send in his bills of costs. That is not what they mean. They have got to find out some ground of abuse. Therefore, they say "Oh those prossional agitators, these wicked agitators, do not listen to them for one single moment. The teeming millions of this country do not want them." No, gentlemen, our countrymen do not want us. They want Mr. Jones of the "Statesman" and the other celebrities who exhibited their eloquence at that meeting! These worthies next proceeded to demonstrate the utter absurdity of any idea of Self-Government for us.

The Charge of Illiteracy

Mr. Jones in his speech says that out of a total of 315 millions of people in this country only a very few know-how to read and write. I take it that he asks us to infer from that people who do not know-how to read and write are worthless—they have got no conscience of their own they do not know what is good and what is bad—they cannot choose between Mr. Jones and Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea. Well, I deny that proposition I do not know what it is in Europe but so far as the teeming millions of our country are concerned, I have very often come across men who are called illiterate, but I can assure you that great many of them are shrewd men of business. They are certainly competent to judge as to who could look after their interest better whether it is Sir Archy Birkmyre or any one of us. They are certainly in a position to judge that. But if they are illiterate, may we ask why have they remained so? What has the Government done, if at the close of a hundred and fifty years, so many in this country have remained illiterate, and in such a state that they cannot choose their own representatives? That itself is the surest condemnation of the present method of Government. It has got to be changed and I can assure you if some kind of self-government is granted to us in the near future within the next twenty years there will not be one single illiterate man in this country. I throw out this challenge: let them put us in that position, give us power to work out our own good and I am sure that before many years are over the people in this country will be better than people of most countries. The illiteracy of our people is one of the

strongest grounds upon which we put our claim for Home Rule. We say that we are not being allowed to develop. We say that our infant nationality is being choked. We are the inheritors of a great culture. We are the stewards of a spirituality which must be presented to the world. We must rekindle that fire. That which is—dormant must be brought to life and light. Self-government alone can do that. Gentlemen, be he European or Indian, who stands for self-government in this country stands for Humanity and God. Our Anglo-Indian friends have this glorious opportunity. The other day in Calcutta I criticised their speeches. Today I wish to refer to some of the statements made by Mr. Jones of the "Statesman."

Friendly Antics of the "Friend of India"

You remember, gentleman, we had some differences in the Reception Committee. We have made them up. I do not wish in the least degree to refer to any of these disputes, but these are disputs which must occur in every healthy community, in every political organization, which is not absolutely lifeless. As soon as these disputes occured, the "Statesman" was in high glee. What did it say? "Oh the extremists, you have been found out; oh, the good moderates, do not mix with the extremists, we will embrace you. Don't you make that mistake" Articles were written crying down the extremists and heaping abuse upon them. If any Indian speaker had used half those expressions, he would at once have been denounced by the Statesman" as a wild agitator. But the "Statesman" is not wild, it is very tame and in that tame way, it tried to accentuate the differences between the two parties. Our disputes were settled as they must be settled. If they had not been, both parties would have accepted the decision of the All-India Congress Committee. Directly the disputes were settled, the "Statesman" thought of the stories of Alphonso and it tried to be jocular. In one of the stories, the "Statesman" said, it is said that kids do not eat up wolves but it is the wolves who eat up kids; and the wolves of the extremists have eaten up the kids of the moderates. However, the revelation came upon Mr. Jones not after many years but in the course of a few days that there were no Moderates in India. I entirely agree with him; only I wish to add a rider that there are no Extremists either. We are all Nationalists.

After a few days the question of the internment of Mr. Mahomed Ali arose and I had the honour of presiding over a meeting in Calcutta of both Hindus and Mahomedans to protest against the Internments. The next day, the "Statesman" published long accounts of Bakr-Id riots and said that Hindus and Mahomedans in this country could never unite. That is the policy of the "Statesman." Do you believe that the "Statesman" newspaper ever thought that there was any possible distinction between the people whom it characterised as Extremists and those whom it characterised as Moderates ? Does the "Statesman" not know that the interests of Mahomedans and the interests of Hindus are identical ? of course, it knows but it chooses not to say so because it has got its own interests to serve. I wish to call some gems from Mr. Jones' speech.

Gems from Mr. Jones Speech

He says : "Because I am satisfied that in this country the struggle will be very hard, possibly fruitless"—oh, the pathos ! it breaks my heart—"and that our real course of action lies in bringing the cant home to the people of England and impostures with which they have been stufled." Cant and imposture with which the British people have been stufled—that is the general proposition I quote from Mr. Jones :

> "The next imposture, the next abuse of political terms is connected with these words Legislative Councils.' There are Legislative, Councils in the Colonies which are really and truly Legislative Assemblies corresponding to our Parliament".

Nobody has any doubt about that !

"Now, a Legislative Council in India is a very different thing."

Exactly so. That is our grievance, we complain that our Legislative Councils are shams. They are without power, without responsibility. But let us see how he makes that out to be an imposture :

> "But the trick played is to confuse the two and to make out to the British people that a Legislative Council in India is just such a representative body as one of these Colonial

Parliaments."

Mr. Jones' Logic

Have you ever heard anything like that ? Yet this is said by Mr. Jones. He says that we Indians have said in England that in Legislative Councils are exactly like those in the Colonies. Is not it too rediculous for words ? We say that our Legislative Councils are shams because they are not representative. We ask for such a grant of Home Rule that our Legislative Councils may be like those in Australia. But Mr. Jones says that we have deceived the English people by saying that our Legislative Councils are truly representative bodies. Does he think that he was doing some conjuring trick ? Well, that is the sort of imposture with which he fed his audience. I will give you one other sample and finish with Mr. Jones. You have read those speeches and noticed that when the name of the Secretary of State was mentioned by one of the speakers the audience hissed aloud. If any speech could bring the Government into discredit and contempt, it was the speech of Mr. Jones. These people who become violently immoderate in speech and sentiment when their selfish interests are attaked are the people who lecture us to be moderate in our expressions. I ask you to say if I am not right in calling these agitators as extremists. I said elsewhere there are no moderates or extremists among us, but the real extremists are those people who by their actions and by their words have betrayed the Government of this country and also the people of this country.

Our Attitude Loyal Throughout

Our whole attitude on the question of self-government is to hold to the banner of the moirs. Our attitude has been loyal through out and as I read out to you the statements of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy you have found that our demands are based on the words and the spite of those statements. We are for the empire, they are for selfish interests of their own. We are for a great ideal, they are for their money. That is the difference between the Aglo-Indian agitators and ourselves. Well, gentlemen, do not be troubled by these agitators. Let them go on in their way. They ought to realise that the days of the Ilbert Bill agitation are dead and gone and buried for ever. They have no right to dictate anything to the Government.

A Word to Anglo-Indian Extremists

The Government of the country has openly declared its policy and the people of this country are in sympathy with that policy; they will try to assist the Government in carrying out that scheme. And if these Anglo-Indian Extremists should come in the way, they should be told once for all that India is not their home. India is our home—our fathers have lived here for thousands of years. The dust of this country is sacred to us. Every incident of its history is part of our Scripture. Who are you who have come here to make profits who are you to stand between us and the Government ?

Under the Banner of the Empire

I say again the message of hope which His Majesty the King-Emperor gave us is about to be redeemed. The banner of the empire is uplifted. Let us close our ranks; let us be united. Let us put forward a definite, and reasonable and sufficient scheme. Let us not be timid. Let us not be foolhardy. Let us fight this battle for the honour of this country and for the glory of the empire.

3. SPEECH AT A GREAT MEETING AT DACCA*

Whatever the Anglo-Indians may say, I believe, I am speaking the truth when I say that there is hardly an educated may in the country who is not today thinking of Self-Government. And I say further, that every educated may in this country has a right to think of Self-Government. If you consider the history of the public events for the last five years, you cannot but come to the conclusion that the time has come when the educated community of this country, taking such assistance from their uneducated brethren as they can, must think out clearly and rationally as to what form of Self-Government they might expect and they insist upon.

His Majesty's Message of Hope

Gentlemen, I begin with ihe King-Emperor's Message of Hope which His Majesty personally delivered to this country before he left the shores of India and his voice still rings in our ears. We did

*A meeting of the citizens of Dacca was held in the spacious room of the Bar Library on the 11th October 1917. Babu Ananda Chandra Ray, Dacca presided, when Mr. C.R. Das spoke as above.

not know then what that message was but this we know that the great question which had been agitating the mind of our countrymen for many years had also left some impression on the minds of our rulers. Gentlemen, after that, many proposals have been put forward for the introduction of some kind of Home Rule or Self-Government in this country.

Mr. Montagu's Statement

But it was only the other day, I believe on the 20th of August, that the statement of the Secretary of State was published. I do not know, gentlemen, whether you have read that message clearly and carefully. You will find in that statement an indication that the Message of Hope which was delivered by His Majesty personally is about to be fulfilled. You will remember that the secretary of State says in that statement that some kind of responsible government is to be granted to this country. Gentlemen, I will not deal with that in detail, as I had dealt with it yesterday at Mymensingh.

The Viceroy's Speech

But I cannot help repeating one think before you, viz., that precisely the same message, the same indication is to be found in the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy which was delivered in early September. There, His Excellency clearly lays down that there are three ways in which the work of Self-Government in this country must be commenced. The first method is the institution of Local Self-Government. Now when any question of local self-government is discussed, and we are apt to ignore its importance; it does not catch our imagination; we do not attach that interest to it which the question deserves. And whatever the kind of self-government you succeed in obtaining—and I am sure we will obtain some substantial measure of self-government—be sure that our national work for the next 20 years to come will be in the field of local self-government more than any other. The second road, His Excellency said, must be the filling up of the public offices in this country with more Indians and the third road was by the introduction of some kind of responsible Legislative Councils—and gentlemen, to allay your suspicions—I must confess, we are somewhat suspicious at times—His Excellency said clearly that all this work is to be carried on simultaneously. So, gentlemen, according

to His Excellency, you will not be relegated merely to Local Self-Government for many years to come but along with the development of local self-government you may expect, according to the message of His Excellency, a Legislative Council which is at once representative and responsible.

"Responsibility" in Politics

Do not forget, gentlemen, that the word, "responsibility" has got a technical meaning in politics. It does not imply merely moral responsibility. It means that the Government must be responsible to the people of the country, to the electors, i.e., the Legislative Councils will be elected by the people of the country—whatever the extent of the franchise may be, that is a matter of detail which has got to be discussed and no doubt considered carefully. But whatever be the electorate, it is that electorate which will elect members of the Legislative Councils and the Executive Councils will be either elected or taken from the Legislative Councils and the Executive Councils will be responsible not to any outside authority but to the Legislative Councils from which they will be taken and thus ultimately to the people. These are the indications that I find in the statement of the Secretary of States as also in the message of the Vicerory.

Self-Government from Many View-Points

I say, therefore, that the people of this country has got the right now, to expect some kind of responsible self-government in the country and the time has come when we must shake off our apathy and devote our entire energies to the consideration of the question as to the precise form of self-government that we want in this country. The question is a very difficult one and has got to be discussed from a great many points. We have got to consider it from the point of view of our nationality, I mean provincial nationality. We have got to consider this question from a wider outlook. We cannot forget that we live and have been living for many years in the midst of an empire. We cannot forget that the different provinces in India are gradually coming closer to one another and a new nationality which exresses not only the different provinces but the whole of India is growing up in our midst and we cannot forget that our interests, even our selfish interests, our hopes, our ambitions are

indissolubly connected with the interest of the empire. These are all the considerations before us. When we sit down to frame a scheme, we cannot lose sight of any one of these points.

Provincial Autonomy

If you consider what is the kind of self-government which is exactly necessary for us, what is the first point which suggests itself to you ! I will tell you what suggests itself to me. The first thing is provincial autonomy. I desire to explain that expression clearly as far as I understand it, because that expression has been used by many Government officials and by great thinkers in Europe. But I desire you to approach this question not at all from the European point of view, so far as conception is concerned, but from our own national standpoint. What is the exact meaning of provincial autonomy ? I say that the meaning of that expression is that people who have for hundreds and hundreds of years been living in Bengal, have come under the sway of a particular culture, have been animated by a particular genius and the provincial government which will be established in Bengal must give the fullest expression to that ideal. I mean that the Hindus have, for several centuries been living in Bengal and amongst them there have grown up a very great culture which has made itself in the domain of science, philosophy, religion, literature and Art. It has got a cast of its own; it has got a spirit of its own; it has got a distinct individuality.

When I am speaking of the Hindus of Bengal, I am at once reminded of the Mahomedans of Bengal. They have also lived in Bengal; they have lived with us, by our side and have surrounded by the same environments and whatever our religious difference may be, there can hardly be any question that their interests, and our interests, in point of education, in point of culture, and in point of nationality are the same. When I am speaking of provincial autonomy, I am not forgetting any community or the members of any particular religion. I want to include the whole of them and I say, taking the whole of them, there is a distinct individuality of Bengal. It is on that individual nature that we must take our stand.

Now, gentlemen, provincial government must be so formed

that it will not lose the particular interest which that individuality requires. The people of Bengal must realise that the whole of their political enfranchisement must be based upon their ancient ideals and traditions, enlarged no doubt, developed no doubt, but still based on those ancient ideals.

Borrowing Ideals from Europe

I am not one of those who will borrow all our ideals from Europe. All my life, I have protested against it, I protest against it again and I shall protest against it so long as, I live. I am not unmindful of the great culture of Europe. I am not slow in recognising my indebtedness to it but I cannot forget my own individuality. I cannot forget the spirit of Bengal which pervades every thought that I entertain, every hope that I cherish, every fear that I have, and so long as I live, I promise before you today that I will devote my life to work out the salvation of the ideal of Bengal. The soul of Bengal had been sleeping for years but directly Self-Government is given to us, that soul, while living in an atmosphere of freedom, will make its enormous claim to give the fullest expression to its ideal. I feel sure that the Government cannot but grant us that opportunity—as I hope, the Government will. Gentlemen, I believe that Bengal has a message to give, feel sure that the day is not distant when the message of Bengal will be delivered and the world will listen.

The Ideal to be Worked Out

Now, gentlemen, this is the ideal of provincial autonomy and how has this ideal to be worked out in practice? We must not rest content with expressing out ideal. We must at once sit down to work to execute that ideal. How do you propose to do it? Different schemes have been put forward. There is the scheme of the 19 members, there is the scheme of the Congress and the Moslem League. There is the scheme of the late Mr. Gokhale. I do not desire to criticise those schemes because it is the universal desire of all our leaders that every district ought to form its own committee to frame its scheme and there should be a conference in Calcutta, where the representatives from all these districts will meet to discuss and deliberate on those schemes, and finally the scheme which is to

be presented to the Congress and the League and to the Secretary of State, should be adopted.

Parochial Politics

I do not propose to discuss that in detail at all, but I desire to impress upon you that whatever the scheme you may be pleased to frame, you must not lose sight of what is called parochial politics. From time immemorial the village has been the unit of our national life. You must consider the reconstruction of our village life, you must consider the education of our villagers. You must consider the question as to how they may be represented in the district association, which will be formed with representatives sent by them and you must so frame your scheme—I am merely telling you as to what my individual opinion is—you must so frame it that the interest of what is called parochial government may not in any way suffer from what may be called the interest of the provincial government. Let the village be so connected with the province that it may not be felt as an obstruction but as a real and integral part of the province. Then in considering the representation to the Lgislative Council, you will try to so frame your scheme that the interest of the poorest villager as well as that of the richest zemindar may be equally represented; and the interest of the minority may not be neglected.

The Charge of Illiteracy

Gentlemen, it has been said, and often said by Anglo-Indians that the great majority of our people are so ignorant, are so illiterate that they cannot be trusted with votes. I do not know, gentlemen, what conclusion you will arrive at, but so far as my own view is concerned, I do not at all agree with that. I do not think that illiteracy and want of education are exactly the same thing. As I know my villagers, I know this that they may be trusted, with the duty of electing persons to represent them in the Legislative Councils. You are more in touch with the villagers than I am—I have seen some of it, but I feel sure that you have got a far more intimate knowledge. I ask you to say whether this is correct that our villager is so ignorant, though he may not be able to read or write, that he does not know between a bad man and a good man, between a man who will be able to

represent his interests properly and a man who will not. I do not think so. And in any scheme which you may draw up, you must make that perfectly clear. I am speaking of this because there is a danger. I do not desire that the mistakes of English history should be repeated in this country. There is no necessity for it. There is no necessity for starting with a very limited franchise and then extending it or having to extend it by civil war afterwards. The history of the Reform Bill in England ought not to be repeated in this country. So, your scheme should be so framed that it must carry within itself the possibility of improvement.

A Central Government

That is, roughly speaking, my idea of the provincial government. I said that the first thing which should strike us is provincial autonomy. But do not forget that there is a wider interest to consider. These provincial governments must be bound together by a Central Government. I believe it was John Bright who said that the future of India was the United States of India. So far as idea is concerned, it is a grand idea and the idea of provincial automomy to which I have referred is part of that ideal. But John Bright went further; he said that the several provincial governments should be connected with the British Parliament. To that view I do not assent because the result of that would be that the wider interest of Indian nationality would be overlooked. So we want a central government. What the character of that government is to be, must also be considered i.e., how they could have most fully represented all the provincial governments.

An Impeiial Federated Government

Gentlemen, the third need which you must not forget is the need of another Imperial Federal Government to which all the government of the empire should belong—a Government to which the English Government should belong as one unit, the Indian Government should belong as another, the Governments of Africa, Australia and Canada should belong as other units. It will be a sort of federated Parliament. I ask you to consider the grand ideal which is contained in that proposal. I do think in the history of the world there ever was another instance of an empire

so vast, of an empire in which so many different races and nationalities and creeds were represented. When you consider all this, you will find what a grand opportunity there is within the British Empire of fulfilling that yet still grander ideal of the federation of the human race. If the federation of the human race is not always to remain the poet's dream, if it is ever to be fulfilled, I feel sure that fulfilment will come through the federation of this vast empire, to wnich we have the honour to belong.

A Word of Advice

Well, gentlemen, that is the ideal I put before you and I ask you to consider all this in the scheme which you will frame. But there is one thing to which I desire to draw your attention and it is this : that in framing this scheme you must not be swayed by a feeling that the Government will not grant this, the Government will not grant that. What the Government will grant and what the Government will not grant, that is the business of the Government; we have get only to consider what is necessary for our national well-being. We have no doubt got to consider the question of our capacity, but we have got to consider what is necessary for our national well being and if you find that certain steps are absolutely necessary for our national development, do not fail, gentlemen, to put that down in your scheme out of timidity. I ask you not to be timid. Do not be foolhardy, but there is no necessity of being afraid of putting forward the whole of your scheme before the Government. People who are afraid to ask do not deserve. Why should we be afraid to tell the Government that a certain scheme of self-government is necessary for our well-being. The Government invites your opinion. The British Government has declared its policy; the Viceroy has asked you to consider the scheme and do not, for God's sake, spoil that by timidity, Say, there are five items, all of which we want; but let us not ask 2 or 3 of these because the Government will not grant all. I say it is no business of ours and I do not think that at the present moment when the Government is full of that truly imperial idea, when the King's Ministers have declared the policy of the Government to grant to this country some kind of responsible self-government, I do not think any scheme which is reasonable, any scheme which is necessary will be refused.

What, if it is refused ? Have we not to carry on this fight from year to year, supposing the whole of it is not granted today. Have we not to place that scheme before the public—have we not to fight for it year to year, giving the whole of our attention, devoting the whole of our energy to that, and go on fighting till victory is ours ? I have seen a great many schemes fail because of our timidity. I ask you to be on your guard because the present is the most opportune moment, because the Government has invited your opinion and in giving your opinion do not think that we ought not to put this or that down because the Government will not accept this.

For the whole of the Ideal

Let us fight for the whole of our ideal. Let us start with this that every cultivator here in this country has got the capacity to to judge as to who his representative is going to be. Let us start with this that we can, if we only try, if we will only shake off our apathy, do the work of local self-government without the intervention of Government officials. Let us think of this that we are in a position to so form our Legislative Councils, by sending proper representatives there, that they will carry out our mandate, that they will carry out our ideal and they would elect such an executive that they will do the work which the country requires. Indicate in your scheme how the Provincial Governments will have to be connected with a Central Government. But so far as provincial autonomy is concerned, so far as the different departments of the Executive Government in Bengal are concerned, I should not hesitate to ask for the whole of those powers being transferred to the people of Bengal. Naturally, the Indian Government will retain some powers and I admit it is right that they should retain some powers now at this stage for the task of uniting the different provinces in imperial matters for the purpose of directing the foreign policy and military affairs of the country. But I insist upon you, I implore you, that whatever scheme you may frame, you will not lose sight of the idea that we are capable of governing Bengal, we are capable of carrying on the work which the Executive Council in Bengal does.

The System to Blame

Gentlemen, our requirements will not be met by the introduction of a few more of our countrymen into the Civil Service. My

quarrel as I said elsewhere, is not with individuals. There are Civil Servants who are honourable men, good men, true men; there may be again those who are not so good—but that would happen in every community. My quarrel is not with the individual at all. My quarrel is with the system. It is the system which is responsible for the bad government of this country. Why is the system bad ? It is for this—that there is no responsibility. An English friend of mine has pointed out that. What are the Civil Servants to do ? They are not responsible to the people. They have to take their orders from the Executive Council of Bengal. To whom are the members of the Executive Council responsible ? Not to the people. They have got to take their orders from the Government of India. To whom is the Government of India responsible ? Not to the people. They have got to take their orders from the British Parliament. Has the British Parliament got any time to devote to India ? Or to make that responsibility real ? No. My English friend says they have not. They have neglected India not of apathy but because their own interest required it—they are to discuss so many questions which are of far greater importance to England than the the question of India. So you get a state of things in this country, where the Civil Service, the Executive Council the Government of Bengal and the Government of India are not responsible to anybody. And under such circumstances, good government is impossible. That is why the Bureaucracy has failed and that is why that Bureaucracy has got to be removed by the introduction of some sort of responsible government—that is why the British Cabinet has suggested the introduction of responsible government. There is no further any question of the failure of the Bureaucracy—That is accepted as to fact, accepted as a fact by people who have the right to know, by people—not ourselves—but people who have the capacity to judge, by people who have political insight and wisdom to come to a correct conclusion. We ought not to waste our energy any more in discussing the question whether this Bureaucracy has succeeded or whether it has failed. It is an accepted fact that it has failed.

The question now is what is the Government that we ought to have. What is the exact character of the representation which we ought to obtain and, gentlemen, I also ask you to consider another thing carefully. In framing the scheme, do not be carried

away by mere clamour. It does not matter at all whether your Legislative Council consists of 100 members or whether it consists of 300 members. It does not matter at all whether the Executive Council will contain two more Indians. What is necessary to consider is how to make the Legislative Council responsible to the people, how to make the Executive Council responsible to the Legislative Council and how to make this responsible government express the true ideal of the people of Bengal.

4. SPEECH AT THE HOME RULE MEETING AT BARISAL*

When I stand here before you, I feel I am standing on sacred soil. To every Nationalist of Bengal Barisal is a place of pilgrimage. Here it was that our friend and Babu *guru* Aswini Kumar Dutt has passed the best year of his life in the service of the people of this country and in awakening within them the spirit of nationality in the true light of spirituality. Here it was, gentlemen, that we met at one of the most memorable conferences that took place in Bengal, I mean the Provincial Conference in which we came into conflict with the Executive. I cannot effect from my mind the memory of that meeting. The song of *Bande Mataram* had been sung before in Bengal but never in that significant way as it was done on that memorable occasion. I remember the conference vividly, the march from this very place to the hall of the conference the illegal orders that were passed, the illegal arrests that were made, and the voice of the people triumphing over all those illegal attempts on the part of the Executive. Gentlemen, that surely was a landmark in the history of Nationalism and if I have come before you to might to speak of the most momentous question which is agitating the whole country, it is only meet that you should remember the struggles, the glorious fight, the unselfish work and activities our leaders which have brought us to this state.

Self-Government and Home Rule Mean the Same Thing

Now, gentlemen, the question of all questions, which we

*Chittaranjan Das addressed a largely attended meeting, presided over by Babu Nibaran Chandra Das Gupta, held at the Raja Bahadur's Haveli Barisal on 14th October 1917,

desire to discuss and consider is the question of Self-Government or Home Rule or Swaraj. Both these are mere names. Bombay may call it Swaraj; Madras may call it Home Rule and again Bengal may call it Self-Government—but all these expressions mean the same thing, the same ideal. Once we understand the ideal clearly there will be no further differences as to what it means and what it implies.

History of the Growth of National Consciousness in Bengal

But before we try to understand the ideal of Self-Government it is as well to take a bird's eye view of the modern history of Bengal which bears upon that momentous question. I shall not weary you by a detailed analysis of that history. But I shall place before you as briefly as I can the landmarks, as it were, of that history within which Nationalism was in the making, within which our self-consciousness was growing and which has led us to the present day when the whole country is demanding in one voice, as it were, some sort of responsible self-government. If you do not understand the trend of events and incidents which have led up to this consciousness of nationalism, I am afraid you will miss much that is important to know. Gentlemen, when we talk of the modern history of Bengal, we have to begin with Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (cheers). He was from that point of view, the founder of modern Bengal although I admit that the life work of this great man has got to be re-estimated, revalued, re-understood and re-interpreted. There is no doubt that he was the first who held before us the ideal of freedom. He was the first to sound the note of freedom in every department of life and in all different cultures that have met today in India. It may be we have to modify that, it may be have to analyse that more carefully and more in details for the purpose of scientific study but it is enough for our purpose to say that he inaugurated many reforms—you might call that reforming activity. He inaugurated the reforms which again, in turn, gave rise to reaction which, again, gave rise to further reforms which made the nation turn on itself till at last, it began to be self-conscious. I do not admit that in the days of the Rajah the nation was self-conscious, but he put before us just the sort of thing which would have helped the immediate awakening of the national consciousness. We cannot but pay homage that great genius, who, first of all, sounded the note of

freedom in politics as well as in other spheres of life. After the death of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, the work of reform was naturally taken up by the Brahmo Samaj and although a section of our educated people followed the movement, it was principally led by the Brahmo Samaj. That movement was nothing but sounding the same note of freedom, though the ideal of freedom and culture was borrowed from European culture and civilization. With Raja Ram Mohan Roy it was the extension and the Europeanisation of our cultural systems. The same ideal was applied by the Brahmo Samaj to different parts, different provinces of our society.

Bankim Discovers the Soul of Bengal

Side by side and almost in parallel lines with that, was another activity which is to be found in the literature of Bengal and principally I refer to the writings of Bankim. You will find that whereas our activity in the domain of reforme followed the European ideals and was a great deal more and more European in its tendencies, the writing of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee shows a different tendency altogether : (A voice : of Bhudeb ?)—and, as, I am remainded, also in the writings of Bhudeb—in their writings an attempt was made, though it was not perfect by any means, still an attempt, an honest and sincere attempt was made to discover the soul of Bengal. In that period of our literary history you will find the glorification of Bengal. Bengal was held up as mother and with him, Durga was nothing but the personification, as it were, of Bengal; and in other writings of his you will find an attempt is made to depict though in a somewhat superficial way our national life, to dive deep into the history of our people, into the instincts and culture of our people and find out that which is truly Bengalee and not that which is imported from Europe, All this was in the literature, brewing as it were, and growing in the literature of Bengal but the activities, political and social, were of a different character. I do not know whether it is the result of that literature but gradually it gave rise an agitation which it is difficult to describe—I mean the reactionary agitation of Sashadhar and his friends. That was a blind movement, an irrational movement it may be, but none the less it was a landmark in the history of the progress of Nationalism. There also you will find the nation began to turn on itself, the nation began to criticise the

wealth of culture which was brought from Europe.—Look at it carefully, keenly and try to judge its real value to the people of this country. It was not a rational movement—it started with a hatred of things European, irrational hatred of everything European—but none the less it was a genuine and sincere movement. I desire to be very brief because I am afraid I am tiring you out (Cries of No. No).

The Message of the Great Swami

That movement again, in its turn gave rise to the movement of the late Swami Vivekananda. All that was narrow in the movement of Sashadhar was widened, a more liberal note was sounded. The national spirit of which the first note was heard in the movement of Sashadhar, was developed by Swami Vivekananda and in his hands it became a trumpet, I am not saying that the message of the Swami was the final word in our nationalism. It was somewhat abstract in so far as it was more Indian than Bengalee. But it was tremendous—something with an undying glory all its own. If you read his books, if you read his lectures, you are struck at once with his patriotism, love of country, not that abstract patriotism which came to us from Europe but of a different nature altogether a more living thing, something which we feel within ourselves when we read his writings.

The Swadeshi Movement

I now pass on to another phase of this national history, that is, the great Swadeshi Movement. It really began in 1902. It was intensified in 1905; it went on and I believe, it is still going on. That movement was inaugurated by the same spirit of nationalism made broader, perhaps a little selfish—all national claims begin in national selfishness but made more real. Bengal, for first time, in those days, realised the great soul within her. At that time we became fully conscious so far as Bengal is concerned. We turned to the country, the whole of Bengal became to us the symbol of the soul of Bengal. Many of you, gentlemen, must have lived through that period, must have taken part of the many activities of that period and I ask you to say if you ever felt the pulse of the people of Bengal beat so clearly as you did in those days. (Hear, hear) I say before that movement all other movements were more or less borrowed because before that the soul of Bengal was hidden from

us. For the first time in the history of our national life that soul began to reveal herself and we were struck with the glory and majesty of it. This period of our national life is remarkable for the writings of Rabindra Nath Tagore (Cheers) and of Bepin Chandra Pal of D.L. Roy (Cheers) and many others. But at that time our idea of nationalism was centred in Bengal. We never looked beyond Bengal, we were looking at Bengal we were drinking of Bengal, as it were; and of course, we were enraptured, as all lovers are.

Now, gentlemen, the nationalism of today is wider than that. We have lived to grow and we discover that although the soul of Bengal must direct all our activities that although the soul of Bengal must find its fullest expression in every work in which we engage yet there is a wider outlook which cannot be neglected.

The Awakening of the Consciouness of Mahomedans

Before I come to deal with that I should draw your attention to another significant fact and that is, the gradual awakenning of the consciousness of the Mahomedan community of Bengal (cheers). At the time of the Swadeshi agitation we were held apart. The self-consciousness which grew within us—the soul of Bengal which revealed herself to us, did not reveal herself to the Mahomedans and we found that they were banded together against this national activity; but, gentlement do not be disappointed. You have to view the awakening of the political consciousness of the Mahomedans in Bengal in its true historical perspective, otherwise you will lose sight of much that is important. If you will allow me, I will tell you very briefly something about that history. The literature which would show the wonderful activities of the Mahomedans of Bengal has yet been unearthed but I have not the least doubt that one day you will find that literature in which both Hindus and Mahomedans joined, Hindus writing in Urdu and Bengalee Mahomedans writing in Sanskrit—I have seen one or two such manuscripts and I am sure there are many such—and when all that literature is unearthed, you will find a wonderful history of Bengalee civilization. In the days of Ram Mohan Roy when English education was introduced in this country, the Mahomedans did not accept it. I am not sorry for that. The Mahomedans did not accept it and they were waiting for a ruder shock. They had forgotten what their forefathers had

done in the way of national development. They did not accept English education and at the same time they were divorced from the culture which their fathers had advanced. The result was that whereas the Hindus got on in life, got into government employment, got many things which people value in life, the Mahomedans were left without it and gradually there came to be a sort of estrangement between the two nationalities at the time of the Swadeshi Movement. They kept away from that movement and even fought with their might and main against it. Now, gentlemen, I told you I am not sorry for that. I do not remember how I felt it then but now I see that the very attitude which the Mahomedans had taken that very opposition was the result of their national awakening. We used to deprecate the work of the late Nabob Salimulla in those days because he had organised the Mahomedan opposition to the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. I do not do that now because whatever the form of that activity might have been, Nabob Salimulla succeeded in organising the Mahomedans (cheers). The spirit of nationality spoke amongst the Mahomedans at that time. Once the name is roused I do not care how it is roused. Let it be roused once and then all its narrowness will pass away. All that is true forms part of the national consciousness. What is the result today ? I went to Dacca and the Mahomedans invited me to an informal conference. When I went there what did I find ? Not that estrangement but an intense anxiety on their part to side with the Hindus to combine with the Hindus, (cheers) to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Hindus for working out the real salvation of Bengal (Loud applause). If the Swadeshi Movement was the first step in our national self-conscionsness so far as Hindus are concerned, I say it was equally the first step of Mahomedan self-consciousness. Its appearance was against the nation, but its reality was in our favour.

The Message of Nationality

Gentlemen, the message of nationality as I said before has a wider outlook today. We cannot forget that we are living within an empire, perhaps the vastest, the largest and the most glorious empire in the history of mankind. We cannot forget that however, truly national we may be—and we ought to be national—under no circumstances should we be divested of our own individuality and I say the Hindus and Mahomedans of Bengal, living together side

by side for so many generations, imbibing each other's culture, surrounded by the same atmosphere, the same climate, influenced by the same culture, the two together form the real Bengalee nation. Although we should not lose our own individuality, the spirit of isolation is not the best thing in national life and philosophy.

We must Reach out to the World

We ought to stand on our own individuality in all the glory which that individuality implies but at the same time we must emerge from that and with the fullest consciousness of ourselves we should reach out to the world. That is the true philosophy of our nationality, and if we are living in an empire today, we ought to see that we do not live self-centred, in the splendid isolation of our own individuality. We ought to give the fullest expression to our individuality but we ought to do something more than that We ought to reach out to the world and how do we reach out to the world ? It is by taking our legitimate part in the empire. We should hold fast to this that our individuality should be kept absolutely distinct. I should not give that up for the whole world for if we give that up, we chease to be onrselves. (hear, hear) But stand on that as we must, we must stretch out our hands across to the world. That we can only do by taking our legitimate part in the activities of this great empire.

Provincial Autonomy—The First Step

Gentlemen, the first step in the region of ideal is perfect provincial autonomy. Let us take Bengal. Any form of self-government that we can demand from this point of view must be a government which will secure the autonomy of the Bengalee nation. Then you must not forget that apart from the individuality of Bengal, India as a whole has got a special individuality of its own.

Indian Nationality—The Second Step

We cannot forget that the different nationalities of India, although there are differences between them, although they differ from each other in many respects, yet spiritually and historically they are bound up as so many links in the chain of one living national individuality. We ought not to forget that Bengal,

Madras, Bombay and the Punjab are all dominated by one great central culture. The epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata are epics of not only the Punjab, of Bombay, of Madras but also of Bengal and the rest of India. The great religious institutions are common—I am speaking of the Hindus only—to all the provinces. Each province has got a speciality of its own, I admit, but over and above that, all these different provinces are bound together in one common culture. If we are to hold fast to our provincial individuality, we must also see that the great individuality of India is not lost. At one time the idea was to develop the different provinces, making the provinces autonomous and to connect these different autonomous provinces with the British Parliament. That will not work out our ideal—that ideal will not allow the great Indian nationality to develop and much as I love Bengal and much as I love my own individuality, my own provincial individuality, I should be sorry indeed if any kind of Self-Government is sought to be introduced into this country which will greatly injure that great ideal of Indian Nationality. If the whole of the Hindu races are bound up in that way you must also realise that the whole of the Mahomedan races all over India is also similarly bound up together and you must not forget that the two great cultures must meet together, and the result will be a great culture which is not purely Hindu, not purely Mahomedan but something which is made up of the contact of these two great races. And that is the ideal of Indian Nationality which must be preserved and developed to the fullest extent. If you ask me if I get Provincial Self-Government in Bengal, why I should trouble myself about this Indian Nationality.

India Moving Towards Unity

In answer I say if I have understood the lesson of Indian history correctly, I consider that from ages part there was a movement of unifying the whole of India and I think through the many vicissitudes of Indian history, in the time of the Hindus, in the time of Mahomedan rule and now English rule, throughout the many vicissitudes that one idea stands out prominently, viz., with each success, with every failure, India was growing more and more and becoming herself. I do not believe that in the old times in the ancient history of our country, there ever was one united India—India was never one whole under the Hindus at any time. I hold in

great reverence and veneration all the activities of ancient India. India was great, but the great Indian nationality was in the making. We have profited by what was done in the ancient days, we have inherited all their culture but it is for us to widen that culture for the evolution of the great Indian nation. That day, gentlemen, is fast approaching. I ask you to consider critically the history of India.

Was India Ever One Whole ?

Can you point your finger to any period of Indian history in which there was an united India ? I have failed to discover it. Take the Magadh Empire—that great emire which was built up and which perished in course of time. That empire did not bring out Indian unity to the fullest extent. Take the Mahomedan Empire—it did not—it strove for that and I fully appreciate that that is the tendency of the Indian history from the earliest time to the present day. (A voice : in the time of Ashoka ?) Even in the time of Asoke there was not one whole united India; it was the domination of one country over the rest of India. The great Indian nationality of which I am speaking was not born then. I am not for belittling the glory of the culture of India under those empires —I have the deepest veneration for them and I say the purpose of Indian history is that throughout the ages, through every success, through every failure, through every battle which was won, through every battle which was lost, the history of India was working out her distiny and turning out the great Indian nation. Today we see the vision of that glory (cheers). That which could not come to pass under the Hindu kings, that which was not brought about under the Mahomedan, gentlemen, it is for us to consider now whether we how represent modern India, whether it will be our glorious task to accomplish that; if we fail—what of that ?—others will come after us who will achieve this. But achieved it must be (Hear, Hear). The message of India must be given to the world.

The history of India is working out—is bringing out gradually the soul of India and the time will come—we may not, live then our children may not live then—but I say the day will come when India will stand before the whole world in all her glory of spirituality. The unity of the Hindus and the Manomedans and of all sects and creeds will be bound together in one great cultural

ideal and will influence the civilization of the world (Prolonged cheers). Well, gentlemen, as I am dealing with Self-Government, the point of practical importance which arises is this : that in a scheme of self-government not only should there be perfectly autonomous provincial governments but along that such a scheme should be made that all these provincial governments may be united in one Central Indian Government because in this our desire for provincial autonomy, we are apt to forget the spirit of the history of India. That is the spirit of nationalism today.

Federal Government of the Empire—The Third Step

But what of the nationalism of tomorrow ?—You have to think of the whole human race, and gradually, some sort of a federal government must be established. It may not be in a few years. It may be a long time yet but some sort of Government must be established which may be called the Federal Government of the whole empire, a government to which the British Parliament will send their representatives, a government to which the Indian Government, after it is federated and after it is nationalised and after it is made responsible, will also send her representatives,—a government to which Australia will send her representatives—a government to which Africa will also send her representatives.

Federation of All Nations the Goal

That is the future federal government of the British Empire and I say that as an ideal, we should cling to that and cling to that because we must not forget that the ultimate goal of human activity in every country is what the poet has described, a Parliament of nations, the federation of the world. That is an ideal which has got to be worked out. The time is coming when a definite scheme should be framed to work out as far as possible this great ideal.

The Declaration of the Secretary of State

Gentlemen, many of you may have read the declaration of Policy issued by the Secretary of State the other day and may also have read the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy made with reference to that. Reading these two statements together, it is clear that the time has come when every educated man in this country should set about earnestly to frame a scheme for the

introduction of self-government keeping in mind the idea which we have before us and keeping in mind also the standard of practical politics. Now, gentlemen, if you have to frame a scheme like that, you will of course take into consideration the first point, viz., of provincial autonomy, i.e., of each province. Let us think of Bengal at the present moment. Bengal must have a government which is representative that is to say, the people of Bengal will be the electors and they will elect their representatives to this Government and the Legislative Council is to regulate and control the Executive. The Government official that there are at present moment, will be under the control of that Executive Department or in other words, every office and the government itself will be responsible to the people of this county. That is the first point you will have to consider. You will have to consider how you can bring about these things, the particular method according to which this must be worked out. Now, gentlemen, the second thing that you have to consider is how to federate these different provinces and connect them with the Central Government. These are the two important points which you have got to think about at the present moment and I invite your attention to a scheme which you must formulate amongst yourself. I have given you what my views are but you are not bound by these you must form a committee of competent men to frame such a scheme and I think all the representatives of the districts should meet in Calcutta sometime in November to discuss the scheme of self-government. We shall then adopt one scheme for Bengal in which the interests of the Hindus and the interests of Mahomedans will all be considered and we, the Hindus and Mahomedans of Bengal will present this scheme to the Secretary of State when he arrives here in November or in December.

Difficulties Ahead

Gentlemen, I have told you what the ideal is according to my view, and I ask you to set about working it out. But you must not be negligent of the difficulties that lie in your way. And the first and foremost of these difficulties is the agitation of the Anglo-Indians who have formed themselves into the European Association for the purpose of trying their best to defeat the noble object of the Government of India (Shame, shame). Gentlemen, so far as the Government is concerned, it has declared

its policy openly and clearly and if the European Association sets itself against this noble desire of the Government of this country it would be our clear duty to stand against the mischievous activity of this Association. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, I have dealt with their speeches and the absurdly exaggerated claims which they have made, at other places. I do not desire to repeat them again but you will find that these speeches are all couched in violent language and sobriety and judgment is conspicuous by its absense in almost all the utterances made at that meeting in Calcutta.

Racial Rancour

They have started this agitation by vilifying our leaders and attacking both the ideal and the method of the Home Rule Movement of this country and I charge that the result of that is racial rancour, which I say, it ought to be the endeavour of every honest citizen, be he Indian or be he European, or be he Anglo-Indian, to avoid. Gentlemen, I desire to give you just one or two specimens of that. This is how Sir, Archy Birkmyre speaks of the activities of the people. I quote from his speech :

> "We should have been content to treat this agitation, (i.e., our agitation) with the contempt it deserves, but we are confronted with the alarming fact that the Government is hauling down its colours before these lawless agitators."

Gentlemen, this statement professes contempt not only for the activities of the people, the unselfish and honest activities of the leaders of the people of this country but it also professes contempt for their own Government, (Cries of shame) as it refers to the actions of the Government, the noble actions of the Government in these words :

> "But we are confronted with the alarming fact that the Government is hauling down its colours before these lawless agitators."

Are We Lawless Agitators ?

Gentlemen, our agitation is described as the agitation of lawless people. I read through these speeches very carefully and I challenge any one of the speakers to find out a single utterance in Mrs. Besant's speeches on the question of Home Rule, in her

many pamphlets on this subject which may be characterised as violent. I challenge them to find out a single sentiment in any one of these utterances of Mrs. Besant which stands for lawlessness. I have read them carefully; these Anglo-Indian agitators have not. I have read them carefully and I say that Mrs. Besant has laid down clearly and emphatically that the agitation for Home Rule must be carried on lawfully and by the use of argument not by the use of methods which are against law. She has laid that down so often in her speeches that anybody who refers to that agitation as lawless has no excuse for such ignorance.

Who Are Violent—We or You ?

I will now give you another bit from the same speaker :

> "Most of you are aware of the quality or the language used by the Indian agitator when the wishes to libel British rule."

The quality of language used by the Indian agitator indeed ! Well, gentlemen, you have read the speeches of these Anglo-Indian agitators and you have read the speeches of Indians who have addressed the country from time to time on the question of Home Rule. I ask you to compare the tone of these speeches and I ask you to say who are violent—they or we ? I will give you one choice bit from Mr. Wiggett. He says :

> "Can any one here say that in releasing Mrs. Besant the Government of India has exercised that power in a matter that we have a right to expect . . . . . It is a direct invitation to further noisy and blatant upheavals of violent passion."

Well, that is the language of moderation. I shall pass by that without a comment.

Splenetic Bitterness of a Political Sect

I will give you another from this gentleman's speech. Referring to the writings of Indians on the question of Home Rule and in support of our claim for Home Rule, this gentleman says :

> "Such writing do not represent the feelings of the people of

Calcutta, or anything indeed but the splenetic bitterness of a political sect."

That is very choice language, gentlemen, "splenetic bitterness of a political sect." That is very moderate language indeed! I shall pass by this also without any comment. I come now to Mr. F. W. Carter.

Our "Unscrupulous" Methods

Referring to our activity, he says :

"Unscrupulous methods and audacious claims of a few noisy agitators."

Mark the words—"unscrupulous methods and audacious claims." Our claims are audacious because we want to govern ourselves because we say that for the last 150 years there has been a bureaucratic form of government—bureaucracy has been tried and found wanting. This is an admitted fact now, admitted by politicians in England and by politicians in India—admitted by inplication in the statement of the Secretary of States and the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy. That the Bureaucracy will no longer do and because we saw that the bureaucracy must be replaced by some sort of government which is self-government and which is responsible to the people of this country. We are told of the unscrupulous methods and the audacious claims of a few noisy agitators. That again is language of moderation and calculated to create (A voice : and preserve)—yes and preserve a "claim atmosphere." The idea of these Anglo-Indian agitators is this : that when they speak of us they can use the most violent language, they can incite racial bitterness they can say whatever they like with the most perfect impunity but if any agitators, if any Indian patriot refers in the slightest degree to the evils of bureaucractic government in this country, they are at once a noisy lot who must be punished by the government.

Adding Insult to Injury

I give you another passage from Sir Archy Birkmyre again :

"Of the loyalty and devotion of the fighting races of the

Punjab, Sir Michael O'dwyer has spoken in terms which everyone of us in this room will cordially endorse. But the spirit of the Punjab has not been manifested in other Provinces." Gentlemen, so far as Bengal is concerned—and this speaker was speaking amidst Bengalees, so far as Bengal is concerned, I say, for any body to charge that Bengal has not contributed to the war by money or by manpower is a libel on the whole Bengalee race, I say it is adding insult to injury. When did you allow the Bengalees to wear arms ? When was it for the first time that you called upon them to wear arms and to go and fight our enemy ? It was only the other day. Do you expect, does any reasonable man who wants to put forward reasonable arguments expect that a whole people who has suddenly been called upon to take arms and march against an enemy, that they will at once, as if by a magic turn out a very large army ? Whose is the fault ? Is it the fault of Bengal that today you do not find thousands and thousands, lacs and lacs of Bengalees fighting for the empire ? Whose is the fault ? You deprive them of their arms, you tell them that they are enemies (shame, shame), you declare to the world that they were never fit for military service and when suddenly you call upon them to take arms and fight, can anybody say that Bengal has not responded to the call sincerely, earnestly and if I may say, valiantly ? I say a speech of this description is adding insult to injury. That is what these speakers say of the people of Bengal. Let me now place before you one or two passages which show their attitude to the government of this country when the government has resolved upon doing justice to the people of this country.

Meddling Muddlers

I quote from the speech of the Hon. Mr. Ironside. It is rather a long quotation but I am afraid that I must place this before you to bring out the quality of the Anglo-Indian agitation. I hope you will bear with me. He says —

"At any rate, we don't want any from the House of Commons, and I would Commend this remark to Mr. Montagu, for we distrust them root and branch. At this distance we

watch the unhealthy game which proceeds at Westminster and to honest men it is enough to make one weep for one's country; and I think, you will agree with me, gentlemen, that we have none of it here. This is no time for meddling, least of all from a representative of a Ministry who one and all by their worlds and deeds brought the old country to the verge of internal ruin, vilified honest men and patriots, slithered into unprepared, and having made a mess of everything have hung on to their self-elected posts liked limpets until a second time the distruction of the empire was nearly effected. We are not taking the same risk here. Mr. Montagu I believe, started in a department created for the definite purpose of helping to win the war. Had it been of any use, I presume, he would have stayed there but being one of a party of meddling muddlers, he has found his way back to the Indian Office".

This is language of moderation applied to the Secretary of State for India who is entrusted by the British Parliament with the government of this country. I can assure you gentlemen if any thing half as voilent as that had been said by any one of us, this gentleman would have been furious and would have exhibited his fury ten times more; and the "Statesman" newspaper would have said that speakers who make use of such language should be punished by the State so that their speeches may not create disaffection. But when you call the Secretary of State a meddling muddler, I suppose that is allowable. When you heap contempt upon the whole of the British Parliament, I suppose it is allowable. If only an Indian says that the bureaucratic government has been found to be wanting, it has failed in its duties, it has failed in its charge of the administration of this country, it is such violent language that the State must put down.

Anglo-Indians Teach the House of Commons

Then the same speaker goes on to say :

"You must remember that we have to teach the House of Commons before we can gain their ear and support."

I hope the House of Commons will be enlightened by the

lessons which it gets from speakers of this description. (Loud laughter).

Who Brings Government to Contempt

To turn again to Mr. Wiggett—he says :

> "What an extraordinary spectacle !" referring to the release of Mrs. Beasant and the regret expressed by Sir Michael O'dwyer.
> 'Of a sentimental weak-kneed Government'

If this is not showing contempt for the Government I do not know what contempt is. This is not all : there is an alarming fact expressed in some of these speeches. Some of the speakers have stated that the civil servants and the military officers are entirely in sympathy with them in their resistance to any kind of self-government being granted to this country.

Are the Members of the Civil and Military Services with Anglo-Indians ?

Gentlemen, I shall place before you one passage from the speech of Mr. Carter and another from the speech of Sir A.W. Binning.

Mr. Carter says :

> "I appeal, therefore, to the Government on behalf of all Europeans whether engaged in trade and commerce or serving in Government employment. . . .I assure the Government that they are here in spirit."

Gentlemen, the Civil Servants were present in spirit at this meeting according to the statement of Mr. Carter ! (Laughter).

And the other speaker says this :

> "Our claims, as put forward at present, will have the silent, but none the less effective, support of the Indian Civil Service and Military officers whose lot is cast in this country and who equally with us, view with grave apprehension the measures which we fear, an effort will be made to force on us."

Now, gentlemen, that is absolutely startling. For myself, I

refuse to believe this. I refuse to believe that the members of the civil service and the military officers who are servants of the King should so far forget themselves that they should express their sympathy with these Anglo-Indian agitators, express their views to them against the policy which has been declared by His Majesty's Government. I say, I refuse to believe this because if it were true, it discloses an alarming state of things. It shows this : that whatever the policy of the British Government may be, whatever the policy and the declaration of His Majesty's Government may be, His Majesty's servants in India may so combine and may so actively oppose people who stand up for that policy as perhaps to render that policy nugatory. I say, if it is true, it discloses an alarming state of things and I hope the Government will take note of the speeches and make an enquiry into this and if there is any truth in this statement, I ask the Government why should they allow their own servants to so conduct themselves as to represent unnecessary opposition to the declared policy of the Government. (Hear, hear).

What is Anglo-Indians' Claim ?

Now, gentlemen, I have referred to the speeches to show to you how unreasonable in spirit, how violent in language those speeehes were. But what is their claim ? Why is it that just after the declaration of this policy by the Secretary of State in August and the speech of the Viceroy in September that they should assemble in a meeting and oppose that policy tooth and nail. The declaration contained only this ; that some sort of responsible government is to be introduced in this country—nothing beyond that. Why is it that all the Anglo-Indians gathered together and began to denounce that policy before the details are published or worked out ? What is the claim which they make ? I shall read to you from the speech of Sir Archy Birkmyre which puts forward what that claim is. This worthy gentleman says.

"The greater part of the commerce of India the basis of her prosperity is controlled and financed by Britishers."

Mark the word gentlemen, "Britishers" not the Anglo-Indian community alone but the Britishers. He goes on :

"All the progress that India has made in recent generations is

due almost entirely to British direction, British capital and British enterprise. The men who are responsible for the vast interests created by the British in India cannot sit down voiceless and idle when the danger confronts us that these interests will be sacrificed to appease the political appetites of mob orators and Home Rulers."

Does it stand to this that the introduction of any kind of self-government in this country, however safeguarded the different interests may be, means such a disregard of the interests of these Anglo-Indian Agitators that the Government must be forced to give up its honest desire of introducing such a government ? I ask in all seriousness does the claim go so far as this ?—The Anglo-Indian claim which is put forward at this meeting does it go so far as to insist that no kind of self-government, however, limited it may be, however, safeguarded the different interests in the country may be, that no kind of self-government is to be introduced at all into this country because these Anglo-Indians brought money in the shape of capital to this country—a statement which requires examination—because they brought capital to this country that India must forever be destitute, must for-ever be deprived of any measure of self-government ? If this is their claim, it is so preposterously unreasonable that it requires no refutation at all. But gentlemen, the claim is curiously worded.

Do Anglo-Indians Represent the British Nation ?

It is not a claim put forward on behalf of Anglo-Indians alone but it is a claim put forward on behalf of the Britishers, it is a claim by the people of England. I deny these Anglo-Indian agitators' right to represent the people of England. I deny that they have got any right to say anything on behalf of the people of England. If any plebiscite is taken today in England, I feel sure that there would be a vast majority in favour of the introduction of Self-Government to this country (Hear, hear).

Must We be Denied Home Rule Because You Have Brought Capital ?

If this claim is based on the more fact of their introducing capital in this country, you have to consider whether they have not been sufficiently profited by the introduction of such capital. Does it mean this then that because people bring capital to this country,

because they find it profitable to do so, that they would have the right to say to the Government : you shall not introduce Self-Government in this country ? Have they the right to tell the people : look here, we have brought capital to this country, therefore, you shall not have Self-Government ! Gentlemen I have no desire to quarrel with this Anglo-Indian agitators. We do not regard politics from that utterly selfish point of view from which they regard it.

Their Only Claim is Adequate Representation

I am free to admit in any scheme of Self-Government which is framed and which is accepted by the people and the Government of this country, these Anglo-Indian merchants ought to be allowed to be represented, that is to say, I do not desire that any scheme should be framed which would disregard the interests of any class of people whether Hindu Mahomedan or Anglo-Indian, whatever the basis of the franchise may be. But I say that these people have got no right to dictate to the Government of India and to the people alike that they shall not have Self-Government. I ask my Anglo-Indian friends to consider this question from a little higher point of view. They must see that India cannot ever remain without Self-Government. They must see that at some time or other the voice of the people is bound to be heard and if they do their duty by this country, by which they have been profited to a very large extent, they ought to help in this work of Self-Government rather than oppose it. I call upon them again to stand on a higher platform and consider the question of Self-Government not in this way but more seriously and with more consideration for the interest of the people of this country.

Stirring up Conflicting Interests

Now, gentlemen, there is another difficulty to which I must also refer. When there are so many conflicting interests in this country it may be that particular classes of people will be instigated to stand up against Home Rule. I blame no one in particular but I am placing before you a possible difficulty. Interested people may stir up the Namasudras and tell them. "Look here, you are hated and Oppressed by the people, the Hindus of Bengal, why should you assist them and help them to bring in Self-Government because if Self-Government is granted,

the Hindus are bound to oppress you all the more." ? Advisers may be found who will go to my Mahomedan brethren and tell them : "you are as yet backward in education, if Self-Government is granted to Hindus why they will be more powerful than you and they will look down upon you and oppress you." Endeavours of that description unfortunately are not uncommon in this country and at such a momentous period of our history, the same attempts might be repeated. Gentlemen, it is your duty, under these circumstances, you who are educated to go to your less educated brethren, Hindus or Mahomedans and to expose before them the fallacy of any such argument.

There will be no Room for Oppression in our Scheme Self-Government

You ought to tell them that self-government does not mean the Self-Government of the Hindus; Self-Government does not mean the Self-Government of the Mahomedans; Self-Government does not mean the Self-Government of the Zemindars; Self-Government means Government by all the people of Bengal in which all interests are to be represented and if there are any classes who are depressed or oppressed, they ought to be told that the sooner self-government is introduced into this country the better for them (Hear, hear); they ought to be told that we have no desire to restrict the franchise in any manner at all to the disregard of any such interest and if any kind of responsible government is introduced into this country, which is made responsible to the people, they will have the power in their hands to oppose any oppression or injustice in every possible way. They will have the power to return their friends to the Legislative Councils they will have the power to tell the people who oppose them : if you want to oppress us, if you go on in that way, it would be against the work of national development and you shall not have the power to do that. We are asking for putting the power into the hands of the people and are we to be told that these people for whom we are fighting in whose interest we are fighting for the last 30 years, that we are likely to disregard the interest of these people ?

The Teeming Millions are of us

If we are not fighting for the teeming millions of India, can anybody tell me whom we are fighting for ? Am I fighting for

myself ? If I am selfish, why should I bother about self-government ? Why can I not attend to my profession, make money and go home and sleep ? Why should I go all over the country and demand Home Rule which is the only means of uplifting the teeming millions of our country if I have not their interest at heart ? If anybody says that the Nationalists who are fighting for Home Rule are doing so in their own interest I fling the lie to the slanderer's teeth. I say we are engaged in a noble task and we shall not rest content unless such a kind of self-government is granted to this country which will keep alive the interest of every community, which will regard and safeguard the interest of every class of people in Bengal. We belong to the same race. They are of us. God give us strength to fight their battle !

2

SWARAJ AND DOMINION STATUS*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

Again and again has India asked : "Which way lies Salvation ?" In the dim past it was the obstinate questioning of the individual Soul weary of shadows and seeking for Reality. In the living present it is the tortured cry of the Soul of India : "Which way lies Salvation ?"

Let me put this question to you again so that we may obtain a clear vision as to what it is that we must accomplish.

As with the individual, so with the Nation, the question is to find out the meaning of deliverance from bondage and, let me add, sin. It is a sin of those who forge the fetters of bondage; it is also a sin of those who allow the fetters to be forged.

Many ideas have been presented—Self-Government, Home Rule, Independence and Swaraj—but these are all names unless the full implications are vividly realized, and in the process of such realization must come a consideration of the method of attaining the object in view.

There are those who declare in favour of peaceful and legitimate methods. There are others who claim that without the use of force or violence Swaraj is impossible of attainment.

I desire to offer only a few suggestions to help you in deciding these momentous questions. Let the Bengal Provincial Conference declare, in no uncertain voice, what is the national ideal of freedom, and what is the method it calls upon the country

* Presidential Address delivered at the Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Faridpur on May 2, 1925.

to adopt for the fulfilment of that very ideal.

SWARAJ AND INDEPENDENCE

Independence, to my mind, is narrower ideal than that of Swaraj. It implies, it is true, the negative of dependence; but by itself it gives us no positive ideal. I do not for a moment suggest that independence is not consistent with Swaraj. But *what is necessary is not mere independence, but the establishment of Swaraj.* India may be independent tomorrow in the sense that the British people may leave us to our destiny but that will not necessarily give us what I understand by "Swaraj." As I pointed out in my Presidential Address at Gaya, India presents an interesting but a complicated problem of consolidating the many apparently conflicting elements which go to make up the Indian people. This work of consolidation is a long process, may even be a weary process; but without this no Swaraj is possible. Herein lies the great wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme. It is unnecessary for me here to discuss that programme, as we are all privileged today to hear his message from his own lips. With that programme I entirely agree and I cannot but too strongly urge upon my countrymen to give it not merely an intellectual assent, but practical support, by working it out to the fullest extent.

Independence, in the second place, does not give you that idea of order which is the essence of Swaraj. The work of consolidation which I have mentioned means the establishment of that order. But *let it be clearly understood that what is sought to be established must be consistent with the genius, the temperament and the traditions of the Indian people. To my mind, Swaraj implies, firstly, that we must have the freedom of working out the consolidation of the diverse elements of the Indian people; secondly, we must proceed with this work on national lines—not going back two thousand years ago, but going forward in the light and in the spirit of our national genius and temperament.* For instance, when I speak of order, I mean a thing which is totally different from the idea of discipline which obtains in Europe. In Europe the foundation of society and Government is discipline; and the spirit of discipline upon which everything rests is entirely military; and discipline which has made England what she is today is also of the same military type. It is not for me to decry European civilization.

That is their way, and they must fulfil themselves. But our way is not their way, and we must also fulfil ourselves. *Thirdly in the work before us, we must not be obstructed by any foreign power.*

What, then, we have to fix upon in the matter of ideal is what I call Swaraj and not mere Independence which may be the negation of Swaraj. When we are asked as to what is our national ideal of freedom, the only answer which is possible to give is Swaraj. I do not like either Home Rule or Self-Government. Possibly they come within what I have described as Swaraj. But my culture, somehow or other, is antagonistic to the word 'rule'—be it Home Rule or Foreign Rule. My objection to the word Self-Government is exactly the same· If it is defined as Government by self and for self, my objection may be met, but in that case Swaraj includes all those elements.

Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realised within the Empire gress has always given is : "Within the Empire if the Empire will recognise our rights, and outside the Empire if it does not." We must have opportunity to live our life—opportunity for self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment. The question is of living our life. If the Empire furnishes sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred. If on the contrary, the Empire, like the "Car of Juggernaut," crushes our life in the sweep of its imperialistic march, there will be justification for the idea of the establishment of Swaraj outside the Empire.

SWARAJ WITHIN THE EMPIRE

Indeed, the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion Status today is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance, by consent of those who form part of the Empire, for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation. Before the War a separatist tendency was growing up in several parts of the Empire, but, after the War, it is generally believed that it is only as a great Confederation that the Empire or its component parts can live. It is realised that under modern conditions no nation can live isolation, and the Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realise itself, develop itself and fulfil

itself, and therefore, it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

To me the idea is specially attractive because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world peace, in the ultimate Federation of the World; and I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, distinct mental outlook—if properly led with statesmen at the helm—is bound to make lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits the statesman, the problem of knitting the world into the grest federation the mind can conceive—the Federation of the Human Race. But only if properly led with statesmen at the helm—for, the development of the idea involves apparent sacrifice on the part of the constituent nations, and it certainly involves the giving up for good the Empire-idea, with its ugly attribute of domination, I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the Commonwealth, for the good of the world that India should strive for freedom within the Commonwealth and so serve the cause of humanity.

METHOD OF VIOLENCE OPPOSED TO INDIAN TRADITION AND CULTURE

I now come to the question of method. In my judgment the method is always a part of the ideal. So that when we are considering the question of method, we cannot forget the larger aspect of the object we have in view.

Viewed in this light, the method of violence is hardly in keeping with our life and culture. I am not suggesting for a moment that the History of India shows no wars nor the application of violence. Every superficial student of our history knows that it is not so. But sometimes things are forced upon our life which a critical student of our history must know how to separate from the real bent of our genius. Violence is not a part of our being as it is of Europe. That violence in Europe is checked by a system of law which, in the ultimate resort, is also based on physical force. The Indian people have always been in the habit of following traditions and customs, and so keeping themselves free from violent methods. Our village organizations were a marvel of non-violent activities. Our institutions have always

grown naturally like the unfolding of a flower. Strifes there have been of the intellect. Cravings there have been of the Soul. Disputes and quarrels have always arisen, but only to be settled by peaceful arbitration. *Anything contrary, or antagonistic to this temperament is a method which is not only immoral from the highest stand-point, but is bound to fail.* I have no hesitation in proclaiming my conviction that our freedom will never be won by revolutionary violence. In the next place, apart from the special psychology of the Indian mind, how is it possible, by offering such violence, as it is possible for a subject race to offer, to contend against the highly organized governmental violence of the present day ? It is no use quoting the incidents of the French and other Revolutions. Those were days when the people fought with spikes and often won. Is it conceivable that at the present moment we can overthrow any organized Government of the modern type by such method ? I venture to think that any such armed revolution would be impossible even in England today.

In the next place, the application of violence cuts at the root that consolidation without which, as I have said, the attainment of Swaraj is impossible. Violence is sure to be followed by more violence on the part of the Government, and repression may be so violent that its only effect on the Indian people would be to check their enthusiasm for Swaraj. I ask those young men who are addicted to revolutionary methods : Do they think that the people will side with them ? When life and property is threatened, the invitable result is that the people who suffer or who think they may suffer recoil from such activities. This method, therefore, is impractiable. Far be it for me to say one word against the honesty of purpose or the ardour of patriotism which these youngmen are capable of showing. But, as I have said, the method is unsuited to our temperament: therefore, the application of it is, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "waste of time and energy." I appeal to the youngmen of Bengal who may, even in their heart of hearts, think in favour of violent methods, to desist from such thought, and I appeal to the Bengal Provincial Conference to declare clearly and unequivocally that in its opinion freedom can not be achieved by such methods.

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

But if I am against the application of such methods, I feel

bound to point out that it is the violence of the Government which has to a great extent helped the revolutionary movement in Bengal. I believe it is Professor Dicey who points out that for the last thirty years there has been a singular decline among modern Englishmen in their respect or reverence for law and order and he shows that this result is directly traceable to modern legislation which has had the effect of diminishing the authority of the law-courts and thereby imperilling the rule of law. In other words, violence always begets violence; and if the Government embarks on a career of lawlessness for the purpose of stifling legitimate activities, it cannot but bring into existence what Dicey calls "a zeal for lawlessness" in the subject. The history of India and particularly of Bengal supports the observation of Professor Dicey.

The Revolutionary atmosphere in India has not been created all on a sudden. In this country, as elsewhere, it has passed through several stages. The first period was one of unrest brought about by the cumulative effect of a century of administration solely maintained in the interest of England and the English people. The period of unrest was further continued and strengthened when India came under the Crown in 1858. From 1858 to the end of the century covering the better part of the Victorian era, an alien bureaucracy administered the affairs of this country in complete forgetfulness of the best interest of the Indian people. This period was principally noted for the carefully studied neglect of the real Indian interest and for the flouting of the opinion of an articulate and educated people. I do not for a moment deny that the administration in the country in the latter part of the Victorian era was sometimes punctuated by acts of benevolent despotism, such as Lord Ripon's Repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, the inauguration of Local Self-Government, the Ilbert Bill and the Revision of the Indian Council Act 1891, during Lord Lansdowne's viceroyalty. I call these acts of benevolent despotism because the underlying feature of most of them was the consolidation of the power of the Bureaucracy. The only measure of real importance was Local Self-Government, but if one carefully studies it one finds that it is not what it pretends to be. Real power was never parted with even when measures were adopted which superficially considered may be supposed to be for the good of the people. On the other side, measures like Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, the

contemptuous reference by Lord Dufferin to the growing *intelligentsia* of India as "a microscopic minority" and the niggardly grant for famine relief—now and again—prepared the soil upon which the revolutionary mentality of the later days was built up.

Lord Curzon, however, inaugurated the second stage, or the stage of revolutionary mentality by the blazing indiscretions of his inglorious viceroyalty. He it was who for the first time set up the fettish of administrative "efficiency" and placed it above the requirements of the people. On the one hand, he set up this fetish; on the other, he began to flout Indian public opinion in a most persistent and obnoxious way. Circular after circular was issued to counteract and stifle national movements leading to the inauguration of the policy of repression and tyranny - repression and tyranny on one side and the foundation of a real revolutionary mentality among a section of the Indian *intelligentsia* on the other.

After Lord Curzon the third stage was reached when the revolutionary mentality induced some youths to translate their feverish anxiety for retaliation and freedom into real revolutionary activities. During Lord Minto's viceroyalty the Government showed its mailed fist and, with the velvet gloves taken off, a reign of terror was started. A section of the Bengal youngmen attempted to reply to this reign of terror by the free use of bombs and revolvers.

One notable features of this new psychology ought not to be forgotten or lost sight of if the question has to be studied from a broader point of view. The foundation of Indian unrest and of a revolutionary mentality has no doubt been laid by the persistent flouting of the Indian people and by a policy of repression and tyranny. But one is bound to admit that the success of the Japanese over the Russians in the bloody war about the end of the last century and the consequent reawakening of Asia, the Guerilla Campaign of the Egyptian Nationglists and the activities of the Irish Republicians and the subsequent foundation of the Soviet Russia with its world-wide Bolshevik propaganda and lastly, the success of the Angora Government in bringing the Ehglish and the Greeks down on their knees—have contributed not a little to the conviction that India's freedom must be won by whatever means possible.

It may be tedious but it will be profitable to give a chronology of leading events in India from 1905 to 1909 bearing on this question.

1905

February 3—Lord Curzon introduced a Bill to officialize the Universities of India and got this Bill through the Council on February 10.

February 11—Lord Curzon's speech at the University Convocation, Calcutta, impugning Indian veracity.

July 19—Government of India's Resolution on the Partition of Bengal published.

August 7—Anti-Partition demonstration in Calcutta. Boycott agitation started in the Town Hall under the Presidency of the Maharaja of Kasimbazar.

August 21—Lord Curzon's resignation of viceroyalty announced (Leaves India on November 17).

September 1—Proclamation of the Partition of Bengal is issued from Simla.

September 2—A general mourning observed all over Bengal account of the Partition Proclamation.

September 22—In connection with the Partition agitation and the Swadeshi movement a mass meeting was held at the Calcutta Town Hall under the Presidency of Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose and attended by 4,000 people.

September 25—Anti-Partition demonstration in the Calcutta Maidan prohibited by the Police.

September 29—A meeting of the Supreme Legislative Council was held at Simla in which the Bengal Partition Bill was passed into law.

October 8—The leading Marwaris, owing to the boycott propaganda in connection with the Partition of Bengal, refuse to send forward contracts to Manchester for cotton goods.

October 10—Mr. Carlyle of the Government of Bengal issues an anti-Swadeshi Circular prohibiting students from joining in picketting.

October 12—Papers relating to the Partition of Bengal are officially published.

October 16—The new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam

is formally inaugurated at Shillong by Sir Bamfylde Fuller, its first Lt. Governor. The Foundation of Federation Hall and a day of general mourning all over Bangal and the "Rakhi" (Union) Day inaugurated under the Presidency of late Mr. A.M. Bose.

November 1—The People's Proclamation urging on the Unity of Bengal read throughout the Province.

November 8—Mr. P.C. Lyon, Chief Secretary of Sir B. Fuller, issues a Circular against the shouting of "Bande Mataram" in open streets and parks.

1906

January 12—In reply to a deputation from the Indian Association, Lord Minto declares the Partition of Bengal to be an accomplished fact.

April 15—The Barisal Conference is dispersed under orders of the District Magistrate, Mr. Emerson.

October 27—Some gentlemen and students wantonly assaulted by the Police at Mymensingh.

1907

January 1—Queen Victoria's Statue on the Maidan is tarred and multilated.

May 9—Lala Lajpat Rai is arrested and deported under Regulation III of 1818.

May 20—A detachment of Gurkhas arrive at Sirajganj where great panic prevailed among the Hindu population.

June 17—The Amritsar District is proclaimed under the Meetings Ordinance. The Editor of the "Hindusthan" newspaper is arrested and handcuffed at Lahore.

July 11—The Faridpur District Conference, of which Mr. Prithwis Chandra Ray was elected President, is prohibited.

October 2—Police forcibly break Swadeshi meeting at Beadon Square assaulting innocent men and in the night "loot" many shops in the neighbourhood.

October 10—Meetings are proclaimed in all public squares of Calcutta with the exception of Greer Park under orders of the Presidency Magistrate, Mr. Swinhoe.

November 1—Seditious Meetings Bill passed into law.

December 26—The 23rd Indian National Congress broken up at Surat.

1908

February 3—A proposed scheme for dividing Mymensingh into three districts is announced.

April 30—A serious bomb outrage takes place at Muzaffarpore. The bomb was thrown at a carriage containing Mrs. and Miss Kennedy.

May 1—The Manicktola Bomb conspirators rounded up.

May 1—Khudiram Bose is arrested at Waini on suspicion as the murderer of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy.

May 2—Hemchandra Das is arrested at 38-4, Raja Naba Kissen Street. Babu Arabinda Ghose, Sailendra Nath Bose and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, the Manager and Assistant Manager respectively of the "Navasakti" are arrested at the "Navasakti" office for their alleged complicity in the bomb conspiracy.

May 2—Barindra Kumar Ghose, Ullaskar Dutta, Indubhusan Ray and ten others are arrested with bombs, explosives and ammunitions at a garden house at 32, Muraripukur Road.

May 3—Profulla Chandra Chaki, while being arrested at Mokamah on suspicion as one of the murderers of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy shot himself dead by a revolver.

May 5—Narendra Nath Goswami is arrested at Srirampore in connection with Bomb conspiracy.

May 6—Five Bengali Hindus are arrested at Kustea as implicated in the case of shooting Mr. Hickinbotham, a Christian Missionary.

May 15—A bomb explosion takes place on the Tramway line in Grey Street in Calcutta, injuring four persons.

May 24—Two bombs were discovered in a third class railway carriage of a passenger train at Howrah.

June 2—An armed dacoity took place at Barha in Dacca in which forty armed men fought with nearly 300 villagers, killing four.

June 8—The Newspapers Act and the Explosives Act passed by the Governor-General in Council.

June 21—A bomb thrown into a second class railway

compartment at Kakinarah, seriously injuring one European passenger.

June 22—Narendra Nath Goswami, one of the accused of the Manicktola Bomb Conspiracy case turns as King's witness and makes sensational statements implicating Arabinda Ghose and several well-known men in Bengal with dacoity and attempts at murder.

August 2—Of the six accused in the Harrison Road case under the Arms Act, Nagen and Dharani Gupta and Ullaskar Dutta are sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment each, and the rest are acquitted.

August 11—Khudiram Bose hanged.

August 12—Two bombs are discovered near the Chandannagore Railway Station.

August 28—Raja Narendra Lal Khan of Narajole and eight other respectable persons are arrested at Midnapur for complicity in alleged conspiracy to kill all European Officials at Midnapur. (Released on bail on September 18 and the case against them withdrawn by Hon'ble S. P. Sinha on December 9).

August 31—Narendra Nath Goswami, the approver in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case, is shot dead in the Alipore Jail.

September 8—Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji sends a message from Versoma urging his countrymen to avoid all resort to violence.

September 20—Mr. Tilak's conviction for sedition for 6 years' transportation is reduced to 6 years' simple imprisonment by the Bombay Government.

October 14—The Bengal Government issues a resolution extending the order of the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta and the District Magistrate of Calcutta and the District Magistrate of 24-Parganas prohibiting the hoiding of any public meeting in any place under their jurisdiction to a further period of six months from October 22.

November 7—At a meeting in the Overtoun Hall in Calcutta a daring attempt is made on the life of Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, by one Jitendra Nath Roy Chowdhury.

November 9—Nandalal Banerji of the Bengal C.I.D. who attempted to arrest Profulla Chaki shot dead in a Calcutta

lane.

November 10—Kanailal Dutt is hanged in the Alipore Central Jail and is given a public funeral by a large crowd of Indian men and women.

November 23—Satyendra Nath Bose, another murderer of Narendra Nath Goswami, is hanged in the Alipur Jail.

November 30—Mr. Gokhale in an address before the New Reform Club in London states that the condition in India is getting serious and declares that nothing short of the reversal of the Partition of Bengal and a general amnesty to all political prisoners will ever pacify Bengal.

December 1—Mr. Rees in the House of Commons suggested the prohibition of seditious literature from France into India.

December 11—A special Crimes Act for the summary trial of political prisoners and proscribing certain Associations and Organizations is passed into law at one single meeting of the Indian Legislative Council.

December 11—Krishna Kumar Mittar arrested and deported under Regulation III of 1818.

December 13—Aswini Kumar Dutt, Subodh Chandra Mallik and five others arrested and deported under Regulation III of 1818.

1909

January 6—Several Samities in Eastern Bengal proclaimed under the new Crimes Act.

February 10—Babu Ashutosh Biswas, Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor of the 24-Parganas, is shot dead in the precincts of the Alipore Magistrate's Court by one Charu Chandra Basu.

March 2—A question was put in the House of Commons by Mr. Lupton as to the difference in the Russian and Indian method of repression. The Under-Secretary made no reply.

April 15—The prohibition to hold public meetings in Calcutta Squares within half an hour of sunset is extended for another year.

May 6—Judgment delivered in the Alipore Bomb Case by Mr. Justice Beachcroft.

In summer a revision of the Indian Councils Act is passed in Parliament incorporating the Morley-Minto Reforms.

1910

The Minto-Morley Reform Scheme is inaugurated, and drastic Press Act passed.

I have omitted to state in this chronology the principal events from 1910 to present day as they may be fresh in your memory. The annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1912, the throwing of a bomb on Lord Hardinge at Chandni Chowk in Delhi while passing in a State Procession, internments under the Defence of India Act, the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwallabagh Tragedy and the incidents of the Komagata Maru may be remembered as the principal events of this period.

It is, thus, clear that repression was followed by revolutionary movement which again was followed by further repression and that even when the British Government allowed measures which may be described as benevolent, they were always attended by others of a repressive character.

Mahatma Gandhi and Non-Violence

With the Jallinwallabagh Tragedy was started the new era in which Mahatma Gandhi initiated a propaganda of non-violent activity as a new way to fight for India's freedom. Let us hope that the whole of India has accepted it and I would press both upon the Government and my revolutionary friends the utter futility of violence in any shape or form.

NEW BENGAL ORDINANCE AND THE INTERNMENTS

The new Ordinance Act is a misguided attempt to perpetrate violence upon the people. The whole of India has with one voice condemned it and I cannot trust myself to express my feeling about it in fitting terms as I desire to speak with all restraint. I shall content myself by saying that I unhesitatingly condemn it and I have given the only answer which it is possible for any Indian to give to the recent speech of Lord Birkenhead inviting me to co-operate with the Government in its repressive policy.

You will remember that Lord Birken-head said that the

Ordinance has not hurt anybody but the criminals. May I point out that His Lordship here is begging the whole question ? We deny that the men imprisoned under the Ordinance are criminals and the only way to decide as to whether they are criminals or not is to hold an open trial and proceed, not on secret information, but on actual evidence which might be treated in open Court. The insecurity to which eminent writers of Constitutional History in England have referred is the insecurity to the public by the attempt of the Executive the arrogate to itself the position of a Court of Law.

I will not weary you by dealing with each particular case which has been brought forward by the Government as a justification for the policy of repression. Pandit Motilal Nehru in his speech in the Legislative Assembly on the Bengal Ordinance on February 25 last has dealt with it exhaustively and I ask every one of you to read that speech if you have any doubt on the point that there has been put forward no instance upon which the Government can possibly substantiate this unjust claim. I must also point out that it is difficult to believe in the statement put forward in support of the repressive measures by the Government. I shall quote only one instance and I have done. Speaking of the arrest and detention of the nine Bengali gentlemen including Srijut Krishna Kumar Mitter and late Aswini Kumar Dutt on December 11, 1908, Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State, in his letter to Lord Minto stated as follows :

> "You have nine men locked up a year ago by *lettre de cachet*, because you believed them to be criminally connected with criminal plots, and because you expected their arrests to cheeck these plots."

But let us hear what Sir Hugh Stephenson has to say on the point. It is only the other day that he said from his place in the Bengal Council :—

> "I should like to mention three cases which have been used in the Press to throw doubts on the efficiency, if not on the *bona fides* of our methods. The first two are those of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt and Babu Krishna Kumar Mitter. It has been said that no one will believe that they had anything to do with terrorist crime and that, therefore, the

secret information of the police must have been false and Government may equally well be deceived by such false information now. I never knew Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, but I am glad to think that Babu Krishna Kumar Mitter is a personal friend and *I entirely acquit him of sympathy with terrorist crime.* But as far as I know *none has ever accused him or Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt of promoting crime, still less of taking part in it. The Bengal Government asked for the use of Regulation III in the case of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt because of his whirlwind campaign of anti-Government speeches.*"

It follows conclusively that the discretionary power which the Government in this country enjoys of promulgating illegal laws is capable of being abused. Indeed, it must be so from the very nature of things. The history of the world shows that bureaucratic governments have always tried to consolidate their power through the process of "Law and Order" which is an excellent phrase, but which means, in countries where the rule of law does not prevail, the exercise by persons in authority of wide arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint. Repression is a process in the consolidation of arbitrary powers—and I condemn the voilence of the Government—for repression is the most violent form of violence—just as strongly as I condemn violence as a method of winning political liberty. I must warn the Government that the policy of repression is a short-sighted policy. It may strengthen its hands for the time being, but I am sure, Lord Birkenhead realized that, as an instrument of Government, it is bonnd to fail.

REFORMS ACT AND CO-OPERATION

I have so far dealt with the question of method in order to show that violence is both immoral and inexpedient—immoral, because it is not in keeping with our life and culture—inexpedient, because it is inconceivable that at the present day we can overthrow any organised Government by bombs and revolvers. Then the question arises : What method should we pursue in order to win Swaraj ? We have been gravely told that Swaraj is within our grasp if only we co-operate with the Government in working

the present Reform Act. With regard to that argument, my position is perfectly clear, and I should like to re-state it, so that there may be no controversy about it. If I were satisfied that the present Act has transferred any real responsibility to the people—that there is opportunity for self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment under the Act—I would unhesitatingly co-operate with the Government and begin the constructive work within the Council Chamber. But I am not willing to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. I will dot detain you today with any arguments tending to show that the Reform Act has not tranferred any responsibility to the people, I have dealt with the question exhaustively in my address at the Ahmedabad Congress, and if further arguments are necessary, they will be found in the evidence given before the Muddiman Committee by men whose moderation cannot be questioned by the Government. The basis of the present Act is distrust of the Ministers; and there can be no talk of co-operation in an atmosphere of distrust. At the same time, I must make clear my position—and, I hope, of the Bengal Provincial Conference—that, provided some real responsibility is transferred to the people, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with the Government. But *to make such co-operation real and effective two things are necessary—first, there should be a real change of heart in our rulers; secondly, Swaraj in the fullest sense must be guaranteed to us at once, to come automatically in the near future.* I have always maintained that we should make large sacrifices in order to have the opportunity to begin our constructive work at once; and I think you will realize that a few years are nothing in the history of a nation, provided the foundation of Swaraj is laid at once and there is a real change of heart both in the ruler and in the subject. You will tell me that "change of heart" is a fine phrase, and that some practical demonstration should be given of that change. I agree. But that demonstration must necessarily depend on the atmosphere created by any proposed settlement. An atmosphere of trust or distrust may be easily felt, and in any matter of peaceful settlement great deal more depends on the spirit behind the terms than the actual terms themselves. It is impossible to lay down the exact terms of any such settlement at the present moment; but if a change of heart takes place and negotiations are carried on by both sides in the spirit of peace, harmony and mutual trust, such terms are

capable of precise definition.

CONDITIONS PRECEDENT TO CO-OPERATION

A few suggestions may, however, be made having regard to what is nearest to the hearts of the people of Bengal.

In the first place, the Government should divest itself of its wide discresionary powers of constraint, and follow it up by proclaiming a general amnesty of all political prisoners. In the next place, the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth, in the near future, and that in the meantime, till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation of such Swaraj should be laid at once. What is a sufficient foundation is, and must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole, but also between the different communities, not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities, as I said in my Presidential Speech at Gaya.

I must also add that *we on our part should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word, deed, or gesture encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement.* This undertaking is not needed, for the Bengal Provincial Conference has never identified itself with the revolutionary propaganda. I believe that with a change of heart on the part of the Government, there is bound to be produced a change in the mental outlook of the revolutionary, and with settlement such as I have described, the revolutionary movement will be a thing of the past, and the very power and energy which is now directed against the Government will be devoted to the real service of the people.

WHAT TO DO IF GOVERNMENT REJECTS OFFER OF SETTLEMENT

If, however, our offer of a settlement should not meet with any response, we must go on with out national work on the lines which we have pursued for the last two years so that it may become impossible for the Government to carry on the administration of the country except by the exercise of its exceptional powers. There are some who shrink from this step, who point

out with perfect logic that we have no right to refuse supplies unless we are prepared to go to the country and advise the subject not to pay the taxes. My answer is that I want to create the atmosphere for national civil disobedience, which must be the last weapon in the hand of the people striving for freedom. I have no use for historical precedent; but if reference is to be made to English history in our present struggle, I may point out that refusal to pay taxes in England in the time of the Stuarts came many years after the determination of the Parliament to refuse supplies. The atmosphere for civil disobedience is created by compelling the Government to raise money by the exercise of its exceptional powers; and when the time comes we shall not hesitate to advise our countrymen not to pay taxes which are sought to be raised by the exercise of the exceptional powers vested in the Government.

I hope that time will never come—indeed I see signs of a real change of heart everywhere—but let us face the fact that it may be necessary for us to have recourse to civil disobedience if all hopes of reconciliation fail. But let us also face that fact that civil disobedience requires a high stage of organization, an infinite capacity for sacrifice, and a real desire to subordinate personal and communal interest to the common interest of the nation—and I can see little hope of India ever being ready for civil disobedience until she is prepared to work Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme to the fullest extent. The end, however, must be kept in view, for freedom must be own.

FINAL MESSAGE AND APPEAL

But, as I have said, I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts, and I think I see a real desire for construction, for consolidation. I believe that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver, and she is anxious to deliver it in the Council Chamber of that great Commonwealth of Nations of which I have spoken. Will British statesmen rise to the occasion ? To them I say : You can have peace today on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. To the British community in India. I say, you have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to co-operate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognize

your right to be heard in the final settlement. To the people of Bengal I say, you have made great sacrifices for daring to win political freedom, and on you has fallen the brunt of official wrath. The time is not yet for putting aside your political weapons. Fight hard, but fight clean; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, enter the Peace Conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity. Nationalism is merely a process in self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment. It is not an end in itself. The growth and development of nationalism is necessary so that humanity may realize itself, develop itself, and fulfil itself; and I beseech you, when you discuss the terms of settlement, do not forget the larger claim of humanity in your pride of nationalism. For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek, I seek a Federation of the States of India; each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people; each bound to each in the common service of all; a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth.

3

SWAROJ AND COUNCIL-ENTRY*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

THE COMPROMISE AND THE SPINNING FRANCHISE

A. (i) The Congress hereby endorses the following agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshabandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, acting on behalf of the Swaraya Party, on the other :

THE AGREEMENT

Whereas, although Swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India, the country is divided into different groups, seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the Nation towards Swaraj, and whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause, and whereas it is desirable to re-unite these parties, for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the Local Government with the sanction of the Governor-General, and whereas, in the opinion of the undersigned, this repression is

*Speech delivered in moving the resolution on the "Compromise and the Spinning Franchise" at the Session of the Congress held at Belgaum in December, 1924.

aimed in reality not at any party of violence, but at the Swaraj Party in Bengal, and therefore, at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas, therefore, it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties, for putting forth the united strength of the Nation against the policy of repression, we the undersigned strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum :

" 'The Congress should suspend the programme of Non-Co-operation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

" 'The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done as may be found necessary by different sections within the Congress, and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and all the antecedent processes and the spread of hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar, and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and the Muhammadans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them, should be carried on by all sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party, on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation, and for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and administer its own funds.

" 'Inasmuch as experience has shown that, without universal spinning, India can not become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirements, and inasmuch as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and the Congress men and women, and in order to popularise hand-spinning and its products, the Congress should repeal Article VII of the Congress Constitution and should substitute the following thereof :

" 'No one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organisation who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and

does not make a contribution of 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or, in case of illness, unwillingness or any such cause, a like quality of yarn spun by any other person.'

"(ii) The Congress hopes that the agreement will result in true unity between the two wings of the Congress and will also enable persons belonging to other political organisations to join the Congress. The Congress congratulates the Swarajists and others arrested under the new Ordinance or Regulation III of 1818 and is of opinion that such arrests are inevitable so long as the people of India have not the capacity for vindicating their status and liberty, and is further of opinion that such capacity, in the present circumstances of the country, be developed by achieving the long deferred exclusion of foreign cloth; and, therefore, as a token of the earnestness and determination of the people to achieve this national purpose, welcomes the introduction of hand-spinning as part of the franchise, and appeals to every person to avail himself or herself of it and join the Congress.

"(iii) In view of the foregoing, the Congress expects every Indian, man and woman, to discard all foreign cloth and to use and wear hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar, to the exclusion of all other cloth.

"With a view to accomplish the said purpose without delay, the Congress expects all Congress members to help the spread of hand-spinning and the antecedent processes and the manufacture and the sale of Khaddar.

"(iv) The Congress appeals to the Princes and wealthy classes of India, and the members of political and other organisations not represented on the Congress, and Municipalities, Local Boards, Panchayats and such other institutions, to extend their help to the spread of hand-spinning by personal use and otherwise, and especially by giving liberal patronage to the classes of artistic designs in the fine Khaddar.

"(v) The Congress appeals to the merchants engaged in the foreign cloth and yarn trade to appreciate the interests of the Nation, and discontinue their importation of foreign cloth and yarn, and help the national cottage industry by dealing in Khaddar.

"(vi) It having come to the notice of the Congress that

varieties of cloth are manufactured in mills and other looms out of mill yarn and sold in the Indian market as Khaddar, the Congreess appeal to the mill-owners and other manufacturers concerned to discontinue this undesirable practice, and further appeals to them to encourage the revival of the ancient cottage industry of India by restricting their operations among those parts of the country that have not yet come under the Congress influence, and appeals to them to discontinue the importation of foreign yarn.

"(vii) The Congress appeals to the heads and leaders of all religious denominations, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, to preach to their congregations the message of Khaddar and advise them to discontinue the use of foreign cloth.

"B. The present Article VII of the Constitution is to be repealed and the following is to be substituted therefor :

"(i) Every peson not disqualified under Article IV shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organisation controlled by the Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no one shall be member of any Congress Committtee or organisation who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and does not make a contribution of his or her own spinning, or in the case of illness or unwillingness or any such cause, the same quantity of yarn spun by any other person.

"Provided also that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organisations at one and the same time.

"(ii) The year of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to the 31st December. The said subscription shall be payable in advance. Members joining in the middle of the year shall contribute the full quantity due from the beginning of the year.

"*Transitory Provision* -During 1925 the subscription shall be 20,000 yards only, and shall be payable on or before the 1st March, or in instalments as aforesaid.

"(iii) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates or any committee or subcommittee of any Congress organisation whatsoever, or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meetings of the

Congress or any Congress organisation or any committee thereof, if he has not contributed the yarn subscription or the instalments due.

"Any member, who has made default in the payment of the yarn subscription, may have his or her rights restored by paying the the subription in respect of which the default has occurred and the intalment for the month then current.

"(iv) Every Provincial Congress Committee shall send to the General Secretary, the All-India Congress Committee, from month to month, returns of membership and of the yarn received by it in virtue of this Article. The Provincial Congress Committees shall contribute ten per cent, of yarn subscriptions or their value to the All-India Congress Committee.

"(v) Omit present Article VI (e) and Article IX (b)."

DESHABANDHU'S SPEECH

Mahatmaji, Sisters and Brothers of the Indian National Congress.

It is a matter of great congratulation to me be asked by Mahatmaji to move the second resolution on the agenda. I need not read that resolution but all of you must now be aware of its contents. It is the resolution by which the two sections, the two parties of the Indian National Congress are to be united. That is the Government—that, after all, the Indian National Congress knows that whatever differences of opinion there may remain, they know, the Indian National Congress knows how to stand united in moments of trouble. It is a matter of congratulation for me : I feel so happy today. For the last few years this is what I have been thinking and dreaming of day and night. You know these unfortunate differences of opinion were expressed at the Gaya Congress. Even there I made proposals of unity. Gentlemen, I stand before you today as a man who has vindicted his membership of the Indian National Congress. I, Sir, have never been a rebel. If I have fought against my brothers, it is because I thought it way duty to turn the direction of the activities of the Indian National Congress. And, after all these years, the history of the Indian National Congress will bear testimony to this, that whatever I have done, I have done to establish the Indian National

Congress on a firmer footing. I did not go out of it to from another organisation; and all may efforts w ere directed at bringing the Indian National Congress round. Today I congratulate myself that I have succeeded to a certain extent.

After the Gaya resolution, yau will remember again, a proposal was made ot Allahabad in the month of February; that was accepted to my great satisfaction. Then again another proposal was made at Lahore, and you will find that it is reported in the resolutions of the Working Committee dated the 17th of April, 1923, very much to this effect, namely, that we must keep this Indian National Congress; we must agree to sink our differences; we must agree to differ; and yet, underlying all those differences there, must be the spirit of unity; the two parties must have the charity to feel for each other. We must work as best as we can. As you may think that this is the only way which is right, so we may think another to be right. You must allow us to work as best as we can. That is the kind of unity which is wanted and which is given by the resolution which I am placing before you.

After this attempt of mine before the Working Committee, which failed in April 1923, you all know that there was a Special Congress at Delhi tried to do the same thing. We also succeeded there to a certain extent, but, to my disappointment, I found greater differences arising thereat. Then again at Cocanada all of us joined. I am not charging here anybody with any insincerity, My friends on the other side who fought me were as sincere in their convictions as I was. We fought at Delhi and we made up our differences; again, we fought at Cocanada and made up our differences. But all the time I knew that, before Mahatmaji came to us again, before his relase, no lasting unity could be thought of. I waited and waited from day to day till found the day when Mahatmaji agreed to the settlement that has been arrived at Cocanada.

My friends, you all know that settlement is. The main thing which stands behind this settlement is this, that no party can say the other party is outside the Congress, I have as much a right to the Congress as many of my friends on the other side. That is the position which the resolution recognises. It reminds me of a beautiful poem written by an American lady. I forget the name of the lady. I forget the lines. I remember only two lines. The first lines were somewhat to this effect:

He drew a circle and cut me out,
He called me a rebel and heretic.

I forget the expression —

But love and I joined to win,
We drew a circle and I took him in.

That is the resolution before you today. Mahatma Gandhi lovingly co-operated with Love and has drawn a circle by which he has taken all of us inside the Congress.

Today No-changers and Pro-changers, they are integral parts of the Congress. Today the Government is not in a position to say: "You divided against (amongst) yourselves." Differences of opinion there are, there must be, as long as human beings have a right to think. But there is such a thing as standing firm and giving answer to the challenge of Bureaucracy. That moment is before us. It depends upon us now whether the Bureaucracy wins or whether the Indian Nation wins. The Bureaucracy has given you the challenge. They have passed an Ordinance, it may be, intended to one province today. Take it from me the Ordinance an insult against the whole counrry. The whole of India stands attacked today. What is the answer? What is going to be your answer? Are the No-changers to say that those Pro-changers are irrational beings and so turn them out of Congress? Or, are the Pro-changers to say that these people, the No-changers, are narrow in their vision and so turn them out of the Congress? That is the feast to which the Bureaucracy was looking at Belgaum! That is the huge fight they were contemplating, a fight between the No-changers and the Pro-changers. Mahatma Gandhi has defeated that little plan. Our answer today is: "Do what you may, there is no bureaucracy in the world which can stand against a United Nation." What answer to give! The answer which I want to give is to fight them in all directions; if you pass this resolution, I have got that sanction. I have got the sanction of the Indian National Congress to fight the Bureaucracy in all directions. Give them no quarter. Take hold of them wherever you find them and uproot their foundations.

What is the idea of Swaraj which haunts me day and night? People talk of Domination Status, people talk of Independence. I

love none of them. I stand by Swaraj. That is my birth-right. What is after all Independence? What is it? Supposing you drive out the English today, do you get Swaraj? No! Swaraj is a higher ideal than that. Swaraj means independence from all obstacles to your national building. In the first place, it means independence from all obstacles, from all that obstructs your path to realise yourself. In the second place, Swaraj means the right of self-realisation, the progressive self-realisation of the Indian Nation. That is the meaning of Swaraj. I don't barter that for any phrase which comes from the West. Now, if this is Swaraj, what have you got to do? Today the whole of your national life is covered by the activities of the Bureaucracy. You have got to free the field of action from the activities of the Bureaucracy. That is independence. But that is only one aspect of the question. You will find out that you cannot remove the influence of the spheres, you cannot remove their activity, without, at the same time, building up your Nation. I want you to keep in view both these aspects.

I have often been asked: "Will Council give you Swaraj?" I have answered this question several times, but I am afraid I carry no conviction. Because those gentlemen who are against Council approached me with a great deal of suspicion. I have said over and over again: "Council does not give you Swaraj, Council cannot give you Swaraj; but Council is at the same time an institution which works against you. You must remove that obstruction in order to get Swaraj from it." But you must get Swaraj by your own activity. What is the Swaraj by your own activity. What is the Swaraj I am asking you to concentrate upon? My idea is that you should actively work to get ready or that you should get ready to capture all the fields in which the Bureaucracy works. Capture the Councils as long as there is anything to capture. When you have destroyed this vicious system, leave the Councils for another work. Council is not going to be the permanent activity with us. Catch hold of all the Municipal administration of the country, District Boards, and all Local organisations, and try to build up your life.

In the second place, the great answer which I want to give to the Bureaucracy today is what is contained in the second part of the resolution, viz., boycott of foreign cloth. This is the answer which I want you to give to the Bureaucracy. It not only

demolishes their claim, but at the same time it builds up your national life in a manner which nothing else can do. That a another resolution which I want to make to you. Those who do not spin must look to the organisation of spinning. Those who do not weave must look to the organisation of weaving. And if we all work hard and do our little—the least that anybody can do—I feel sure that within a short time you will encompass the boycott of foreign cloth. And that day is the beginning of your freedom. That day will be the foundation of your salvation. That is the gospel which I always preach.

I have never spoken one single word against the constructive work. I have tried to include other activities. And today the resolution I have the honour of presenting before you is the resolution which gives you the liberty of fighting the Bureaucracy from all quarters—which gives you the liberty of destroying all what must be destroyed—which gives you the liberty of building up all what must be built up.

In the history of the world, great empire are built up and greater empires have fallen. If the Bureaucracy thinks, in thinks, in the littleness of their vision, that they are destined to oppress India to the end of their chapter, they are mistaken. After all, this world is God's world. We are being punished for our misdeeds. We must make ourselves worthy of freedom, and the moment the Indian Nation comes to itself—the Indian National Congress stands united not only on resolutions but in action—that day the Bureaucracy must disappear.

4

WHAT IS SWARAJ ?*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

If I rise it is not to make a long speech, I want to introduce the programme of this party to you at this gathering of the members of the Swarajya Party. I will not go into the details of that programme either, but will deal only with the salient features and certain principles upon which the whole of that programme is based. I need hardly tell you at this hour that the object of the Swarajya party is to secure Swaraj. Directly I say that, all kinds of questions are raised upon that. It is asked : "What is the kind of Swaraj that you are striving for ?" and some friends of mine are so anxious to have the details of the Swaraj that in their attempt to define they lose sight of the real principle upon which the whole fight for Swaraj is based and that is that we do not want any particular system of Government ; we want the right to establish our own system of Government. That is the central idea of Swaraj. I have said elsewher and repeat it today, that Swaraj—the right Swaraj—is not to be confused with any particular system of government. Systems of government come and go. Systems of government are established in one day only to be broken the other day and another system is established upon the ashes of the old system. What I want today is a clear declaration by the people of this country that we have got the right to establish our own system of government according to the temper and genius of our

* From the Speech delivered at the All-India Swarajya Party Conference held in Calcutta in August, 1924.

people. And we want that right to be recognised by our alien rulers.

WHAT KIND OF SWARAJ WE WANT ?

One thing is certain. We often hear of questions as to the kind of Swaraj whether it will be within the Empire or outside the Empire, and questions are put with regard to that. I have often been interviewed by representatives of English newspapers upon that question. When they put that question to me I always thought they had doubts in their minds that we were creating difficulties. But my ways are perfectly clear. *Iwant my liberty. I want my freedom. I want my right to establish our own system of government. If that is consistent with our being within the Empire, I have no objection to being within the Empire. If that is inconsistent with our being within the Empire, my love for my freedom is greater than my love for the Empire.* (Applause and cheers.) Therefore, let us not try to fathom what is going to happen in future. Let us rest content with the struggle of today and let that struggle be conducted on the right principle and that principle is that we must have the right to govern ourselves. *We must be the judges of what system of government is good for us and what system of government will not suit us. It is not for other people to constitute themselves as our judges.*

That being the kind of Swaraj, the next question is : How can it be secured ? I have put forward from diffierent platforms my view of Non-co-operation. I am told that is not the correct view. Well, let us not fight about words.

NON-COOPERATION THE ONLY METHOD

Whatever other people may mean by Non-co-operation, I do not know. But I know what it means to me. And in the light of what I understand it to be I maintained and still maintain that the only method of fighting this Government and winning Swaraj is by applying Non-co-operation everywhere. When we started this party, we defined it, not that we defined—but we described it. I am afraid of definition. There is such a thing as Deductive Logic. I am always afraid of this. When you start a definition, critics are not wanting in this country who will ask you to define the definition and so on. This is how we put out case before the public,

AN ATMOSPHERE OF RESISTANCE

Now this party declared that the policy of Non-violent Non-co-operation was to create an atmosphere of resistance and include all such activities which stand to create an atmosphere of making government by the bureaucracy impossible.

I Stop here for one moment. Critics have pounced upon this and said; "What, you destroyers, you want to make government impossible !" We have never said anything of the kind. We have said that we want to make the government by the bureaucracy impossible. How does one thing follow from the other ? We have nowhere stated that we do not want any government. We have nowhere stated that we stand for disorder and that we want to put an end to all systems of government. All that we have said, and I shall say, all that we maintained and I still maintain, is that we will not have this government by the bureaucracy. We have said that all such activities shall include on the one hand such activities which stand to create an atmosphere of resistance, making government by the bureaucracy impossible with a view to enforce our national claim and vindicate our national honour, and on the other hand it shall include for the said purpose all steps necessary for the gradual withdrawal of the co-operation of the people of this country without which it is impossible for the bureaucracy to maintain itself. These are the two-fold aspects of the idea of Non-co-operation. I Still maintain that, whatever details of the programme may we arrange, the central idea must be that you must try to create an atmospher of resistance in the people of this country. Resistance to what ? Resistance to the bureaucratic system of government. After all, how does the bureaucracy carry on its government ? Can it be doubted for one moment that even today the bureaucracy carries on its government with the consent of the people ? Without the consent of the people no such government is possible. Therefore, if we desire to put an end to this system of bureaucratic government we must create a spirit of resistance. That is not wrong. That is not an artificial thing. That is the natural outcome of healthy life. We must stand on our own selves. And if we do stand on our own selves, we stand for the destruction—I use the world advisedly—of the bureaucratic institution.

Now, if you develop or gather the strength of resistance,

what is your next duty ? You must tell the Government in plain words : "This is my demand—it is my right to live; it is my right to govern myself ; it is my right to establish a system of Government which is consistent with the genius of our people—and you must be prepared to recognise that right which is undoubtedly mine whether you realise it today or tomorrow or years after. I say that right is undoubtedly in the people of every country whether they realise it today or tomorrow of years after ? And we tell the Government that until they recognise that clear right of ours we do not want the Government to confer that right on me. You have got no power to confer that right on me. Who can confer a right on any living nation ? It is for the nation to take that right and seize that right and to compel the Government to recognize what they have already seized and that seizure is really possible by realization." We tell the Government it is our undoubted right, as we have told the Government today. And that unless they recognise that right it would be our duty to gradually withdraw all co-operationfrom them with a view that is may become impossible for them to carry on this system of Government. Not that no Government should be carried on but this particular system of Government which exists not for the good of the people but for the good of some body else.

NON-COOPERATION OR RESPONSIVE CO-OPERATION ?

These are the two broad principles upon which our programme must be based. What is your method ? Is it Non-co-operation ?' Well, gentlemen, I have given you the idea. Choose your phrase. It does not matter to me whether you call it Non-co-operation or not. I am not used to deductive logic. "O, is it responsive co-operation ?" they ask. I have seen wise people shake their heads and say : "O, you are going back to responsive co-operation. I say I am willing to come back to anything provided I see clearly before me my right and I see that I can seize upon that right by following a particular method. If it is responsive co-operation, let it be so. The whole idea is this that you want to bring in old phrases to suit new facts of life. You bring in a phrase 'responsive co-operation' which was used some years back with regard to the then facts. But a new situation has been brought about in the country and people are singing with another

note. And if you apply the same phrase 'responsive co-operation', well, that phrase must include this. What is there in the phrase? Call it non-co-operation, call it responsive co-operation if you want, or if you like call it responsive non-operation as my friend Mr. Kelkar who is absent today would like to call it. It does not matter to me. I say, give me the thing I want, I do not care what name you give to it.

It was two years ago, I believe, when I was speaking at Buldana, Mr. Kelkar advanced the idea that his programme was responsive non-co-operation. I said : "Yes, it must be responsive co-operation because you put forward your demand. If the Government does not accept it then they do not respond to you. Then want follows is Non-co-operation. Then Mr. Kelkar said responsive co-operation was the same things as responsive non-co-operation. If this is so, I do not know what name you apply to it. But I want to have my programme put absolutely clearly. We will not shrink from destroying any system which stands against our system. We will not shrink from telling the Government that until and unless you recognise our legitimate rights, we will try to destroy your system of government, because we cannot build our system without destroying your system—not that there is a particular pleasure in destruction, but we cannot build unless we remove something which stands in our way.

SUPPORT THE SWARAJYA PARTY

I appeal to you—I make no appeal to the Bureacracy or to the Secretary of State—appeal to you, stand fast by the principle which the Swarajists have put forward before country. Let us act. Give us breathing time. Do not over whelm us with criticisms and questions. I have thought and thought about it for the last twenty years of my life and now I have devoted the rest of my life to the cause of my country. Believe in me, and I tell you, that God willing, I shall not die before I have accomplished my object.

5

NECESSITY OF HINDU-MOSLEM PACT*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

It has been argued by the opposers of the Pact that there is no necessity for it, that the Pact if passed will retard the progress of Swaraj, that it is nothing but a contract, that it is a machinery—a mere instrument, and that people do not want such a Pact. But is not the signing of the Congress Creed or the Congress Volunteers' Pledge a contract or a promise in itself? Does not a promise they make or a pledge they have taken remind them of the great thing, for the attainment of which such a promise is made? But where is their such a thing in the Hindu-Moslem Pact which will impair the growth of Nationality, or by which Hindus stand in the risk of the losing their own individuality? I for one will not have fathered such a Pact, which is but a mere instrument and which leaves aside the consideration that they are men first. And what do I say in the Pact? I only call upon Hindus and Mahomedans alike to sacrifice a little bit of each other's small and petty intersts for the cause of Indian Swaraj, which is to the interest of both the communities.

NEED OF UNITY

So long as Hindus and Mahomedans do not unite, Swaraj will be an impossibility, and will always remain a theme of impractical fancy. But how are they to unite is the question they have

* English Version of the Speech delivered at the Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Sirajganj in June, 1924.

to settle now, if they are burning with pangs of subjection and desire India's freedom. To think that the two communities will merge their respective individuality and make up a new community is inconceivable, and, as I have already said on several occasions, they can only unite by a federation of the two communities based on sacrifice, mutual 'give and take' and understanding of each other's interests. That alone will bring real unity. Can that be called a bargain ? Life is certainly greater than dogma and logic, and I want you to be men—whole men—who will obey none but the will of God, and the Pact is necessary for the growth of that high ideal of manhood and Indian nationality among the two communities. Whether you call the Pact a covenant or an instrument, it is necessary for the establishment of Indian Swaraj for the attainment of which I am prepared to shed every drop of my blood.

EFFECT OF THE PACT

It has been hinted that the formulation of the Pact has sown seeds of discontent, distrust and ill-feeling between the two communities when there were none. But it is not because of the Pact but because of the opposition levelled against it, for which the Hindu Sangathan and the No-changers are to a certain extent responsible. This only helps to give a handle to the Moderates and the Government, for it is to the interest of the bureaucracy that there should be a constant friction between Hindus and Mahomedans as helping to retard the advent of Swaraj. And what do you see on the other side ? Do you not know how the ministerial party is busy in a systematic campaign of organizing counter-agitation in each and every district of Bengal against the Pact and, therefore, against the growth of Hindu-Moslem unity.

A CONCRETE INSTANCE

I have full faith in Bengal and believe that she will yet rise to the height of the occasion and accept the Pact. It is the will of God. Swaraj is coming and you must be ready to welcome it by your sacrifice and suffering. Let this Bengal Provincial Conference sitting at Sirajganj lay the foundation of Hindu-Moslem unity and establish India's freedom.

Bande Mataram.

6

INDIAN NATIONAL PACT AND BENGAL NATIONAL PACT*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

I rise to clear a misapprehension with regard to the Bengal Pact. There is a misapprehension about what is called the Bengal Act.

"Read the Draft of the Indian National Pact and the Bengal National Pact.

> "Resolved that the Committee appointed by the Delhi Session of the Congress do call for further opinions and criticism and submit further report by the 31st of March 1924 to the All-India Congress Committee for its consideration. . . ."

The resolution before you says merely this, that the draft Pacts are read, and all these amendments are moved as against that reference to that Bengal Pact. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee has approved of a particular draft not finally but as a suggestion and they have placed that suggestion for the consideration of the Indian National Congress. The proposal is on the record of the Indian National Congress. And, any resolution which is passed with reference to the question of draft can hardly avoid noticing or referring to the resolution or the proposal which is sent up from Bengal. May I ask, what is all this discussion for ? Does this resolution ask you to accept the draft ? No,

*Speech delivered at the Session of the Congress held at Cocanada in December, 1923.

the resolution merely refers to what is a fact. Is not the resolution of the Indian National Congress to refer to what is undoubtedly a fact ? It is a fact that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee has sent up a proposal before you; and the resolution says: "Read the reports." The resoluion that has been moved before you does not say that you should accept it. I could have understood all this objection if it did say so. The resolution says that the opinion of the whole country should be taken upon it not only upon the Bengal Pact, but everything that would be placed before the Committee. May I ask, what harm is there, why there is so much opposition ? Is it a completed Pact ? No, we all know nothing can be a Pact in that sense till it is solemnly assented to and agreed upon. Why is this objection, pray ? Many of you are under the impression having regard to the few speeches that have already been made that you are asked to accept the Bengal Pact, that it is a wicked Pact, that it created division between the Hindus and Mussalmans, and therefore, some of you may think that you should not accept it. Whether you accept it or not, is in your hands. Not now, but after the Committee have gathered the opinion throughout the country and have placed their report before you, you would be in a position to say: "We shall not have this draft, we must have another." But now, why all this anger ? Why is this resentment against Bengal ? What has Bengal done ? Bengal knew that the All-India Congress Committee, the Indian National Congress, was going to consider the question on National Pact. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee has made its suggestion. It may be right or it may be utterly wrong. You are not called upon to endorse that view now. All that you are called upon to do now is to say in the resolution that you have read this suggestion. It is on the records of the Congress. How can you avoid reading it ? Are you to say this that although Bengal has sent up its suggestion we the Indian National Congress refuse to read it. What is asked of you ? What is the meaning of this opposition ? I have not been able to gather yet. What are you asked to do ? Take the opinion of every association in Bengal, take the opinion of every class in Bengal, take the opinion of every community in Bengal and send them here. We don't want to shut this out. Because we call it a Pact, it does not become a pact before it is agreed upon. Suppose, you write out an agreement on a piece of paper. That piece of paper does not become an

agreement till you sign it.

What is this misapprehension about ? Is Bengal debarred from making that suggestion ? Is any human being in India to be deprived of his undoubted right to press before the Congress his suggestion ? Is the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to be deprived of its right to place its suggestion before the Congress ? It is said that you gentlemen have not read it. Is it the fault of Bengal ? Bengal sent it up the All India Congress Committee, the Subjects Committee considered that, it is printed as one of the resolutions of the Subjects Committee. And, all that the resolution says is "Read the draft of the Indian National Pact and the Bengal National Pact." You may delete the Bengal National Pact from the resolution. But I assure you, you cannot delete Bengal from the Indian National Congress or from the history of India ! Bengal demands the right of having her suggestion considered. You may throw it out after considering it What right has any-boday to say that Bengal is to be deprived of placing her suggestion before the India National Congress ? That is what the amendment asks. It is unnecessary to go into the mertis of the draft. We are not concerned about it now. If there are clauses in it which are objectionable, well, place before the Committee your views upon that in future, and then you will have the full right of discussing it later on when the Committee makes its report. It is idle, I submit at this stage, to cry out : You "must delete Bengal !" You cannot delete Bengal. Bengal is where she stands ! She is on the Map of India ! She is an integral part of the Constititution of the Indian National Congress. And, she is intimately associated with the history of all political agitation from the commencement of this Congress down to the present day. You cannot delete Bengal. Bengal will not be deleted in this unceremonious fashion.

Things of falsehood. Must we not remove them ? Can you say that it is not connected with your National life today ? It is falsehood. This falsehood is oppressing your life today. It is upon you. It is about you. It is on all sides of you and it is working dreadful results. Must you not remove it today ? What is the object of the boycott of Councils, if it is not to wreck the Councils ? These words are not mine. These are the words of our revered leader Mahatma Gandhi. Must you not wreck the Reforms ? What is wrecking the Reforms ? Remove the obstacles —remove the impediments, get rid of it—clear it, destroy it—put it away so that it may not hinder your self-realisation. In what sense do I offened you when I say that I want to non-co-operate from within. Councils are not like so many buildings—the Assembly is not a building into which you are going to enter. It is an Institution—it is an organization which is upon you, which is drinking your life-blood, which is oppressing you with all its strength. You must get rid of it. You must get rid of these institutions—you must get rid of this organization. And the only way to do so is by making Government by Councils impossible. May be I am wrong, but I declare to you I stick fast to the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation. I will have nothing to do with those who go there for the sake of posts—who go there to get the little things they call good—crumbs from the Legislative Table. I abhor that, I abominate that. I say that either I stand there to wreck the Reforms—to wreck the monster that is drinking our life-blood or do not want to go there at all. I rejoice, therefore, that this compromise resolution insists on the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation.

8

NON-COOPERATION AND COUNCIL-ENTRY*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

As I stand before you today a sense of overwhelming loss overtakes me, and I can scarcely give expression to what is uppermost in the minds of all and everyone of us. After a memorable battle which he gave the Bureaucracy. Mahatma Gandhi has been seized and cast into prison; and we shall not have his guidance in the proceedings of the Congress this year. But there is inspiration for all of us in the last stand which he made in the citadel of the ememy, in the last defiance which he hurled at the agents of the Bureaucracy. To read a story equal in pathos, in dignity, and in sublimity, you have to go back over two thousand years, when, Jesus of Nazareth, "as one that perverted the people," stood to take his trial before a foreign tribunal.

> "And Jesus stood before the Governor : and the Governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews ? And Jesus said unto him. Thou sayest.
> "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.
> "Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee ?
> "And he answered him to never a word; in so much that the Governor marvelled greatly."

* Presidential Address delivered at the Session of the Congress held at Gaya December, 1922.

Mahatma Gandhi took a different course. He admitted that he was guilty, and he pointed out to the Public Prosecutor that his guilt was greater than he, the Prosecutor, had alleged; but he maintained that if he had offended against the law of Bureaucracy, in so offending he had obeyed the law of God. If I may hazard a guess, the Judge who tried him and who passed a sentence of imprisonment on him was filled with the same feeling of marvel as Pontius Pilate had been.

Great in taking decisions, great in executing them, Mahatma Gandhi was incomparably great in the last stand which he made on behalf of his country. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest men that the world has ever seen. The world hath need of him, and if he is mocked and jeered at by "the people of importance," "the people with a stake in the country"—Scribes and Pharisees of the days of Christ—he will be gratefully remembered, now and always, by a nation which he led from victory to victory.

LAW AND ORDER

Gentlemen, the time is a critical one and it is important to seize upon the real issue which divides the people from the Bureaucracy and its Indian allies. During the period of repression which began about this time last year it was this issue which pressed itself on our attention. This policy of repression was supported and in some cases instigated by the Moderate Leaders who are in the Executive Government. I do not charge those who supported the Government with dishonesty or want of patriotism. I say they were led away by the battle cry of Law and Order. And it is because I believe that there is a fundamental confusion of thought behind this attitude of mind that I propose to discuss this plea of Law and Order. "Law and Order" has indeed been the world.

It has been gravely asserted not only by the Bureaucracy but also by its appologists, the Moderated Party, that a settled Government is the first necessity of any people and that the subject has no right to present his grievances except in a constitutional way, by which I understand in some way recognised by the constitution. "If you cannot actively co-operate in the maintenance of the law of the land," they say. "It is your duty as a responsible citizen to obey it passively. Non-resistance is the

least that the Government is entitled to expect from you. This is the whole political philosophy of the Bureaucracy—the maintenance of law and order on the part of the Government, and an attitude of passive obedience and non-resistance on the part of the subject. But was not that the political philosophy of every English King from William the Conqueror to James II ? And was not the political philosopy of the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns and of the Bourbons ? And yet freedom has come, where it has come, by disobedience of the very laws which were proclaimed in the name of law and order. Where the Government is arbitrary and despotic and the fundamental rights of the people are not recognised, it is idle to talk of law and order.

The doctrine has apparently made its way to this country from England. I shall, therefore, refer to English history to find out the truth about this doctrine. That history has recorded that most of the despots in England who exercised arbitrary away over the people proposed to act for the good of the people and for the maintenance of law and order. English absolutism from the Normans down to the Stuarts tried to put itself on a constitutional basis through the process of this very law and order. The pathetic speech delivered by Charles I just before his execution puts the whole doctrine in a nutshell. "For the people," he said, "truly. I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whatsoever, but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consist in having Government, those laws by which their lives and their goods may be their own. It is not their having a share in the Government, that is nothing appertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clear different things." The doctrine of law and order could not be stated with more admirable clearness. But though the English Kings acted constitutionally in the sense that their acts were in accordance with the letter of law and were covered by precedents, the subject always claimed that they were free to assert their fundamental rights and to wrest them from the King by force or insurrections. The doctrine of law and order received a rude shock when King John was obliged to put his signature to the Magna Charta on the 15th of June 1215. The 61st clause of the Charter is important for our purpose securing as it did to the subject the liberty of rebellion as a means for enforcing the due observance of the Charter by the Crown. Adams, a celebrated writer of the English Constitutional History says that the conditional right to rebel is as much at the

foundation of the English constitution today as it was in 1215. But though the doctrine of law and order had received a rude shock, it did not altogether die; for the intervening period the Crown claimed and asserted the right to raise money, not only by indirect taxes but also by forced loans and benevolences; and freqently exercised large legislative functions not only by applying what are known as suspending and dispensing powers but also by issuing proclamations. The Crown claimed, as Hallam says, "not only a kind of supplemental right of legislation to perfect and carry out what the spirit of existing laws might require but also a paramount supremacy, called sometimes the king's absolute or sovereign power which sanctioned commands beyond the legal prerogative, *for the sake of public safety* whenever the council might judge to be that in hazard." By the time of the Stuarts the powers claimed by the Crown were recognised by the courts of law as well founded, and, to quote the words of Adams : "The forms of law became the engines for the perpetration of judicial murders." It is necessary to remember that it was the process of law and order that helped to consolidate the powers of the Crown; for it was again and again laid down by the Court of Exchequer that the power of taxation was vested in the Crown, where it was "*for the general benefit of the people.*" As Adams says, "the Stuarts asserted a legal justification for everything done by them," and, "on the whole, history was with the King."

But how did the Commons meet this assertion of law and order ? They were strict non-co-operators both within and outside the Parliament. Within the Parliament they again and again refused to vote supplies unless their grievenances were redressed. The King retorted by raising Custom duties on his own initiative and the courts of law supported him. The Commons passed a resolution to the effect that persons paying them "should be reputed betrayers of liberties of England and enemies to the same." There was little doubt that revolution was on the land; and King Charles finding himself in difficulty gave his Royal Assent to the Bill of Rights on the 17th of June 1626. The Bill of Rights constitutes a triumph for non-cooperators; for it was by their refusal to have any part or share in the administration of the country that the Commons compelled the King to acknowledge their rights. The events that followed between 1629 and 1640 made the history of England. Inspite of the Bill of Rights the

must happen in every war of arms, the victory for individual liberty was only temporary. Though the result of civil war was disastrous from the point of view of individual liberty and though it required another resolution, this time a non-violent revolution, to put individual liberty on a sure foundation, "the knowledge that the subject had sat in rude judgment on their King, man to man, speeded the slow emancipation of the mind from the shackles of custom and ancient reverence."

The revolution of 1688—a bloodless revolution—secured for England that rule of law which is the only foundation for the maintenance of law and order. It completed the work which the Long Parliament had begun and which the execution of Charles I had interrupted. But how was the peaceful revolution of 1688 brought about ? By defiance of authority and by rigid adherence to the principle that it is the inalienable right of the subject to resist the exercise by the executive of wide, arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint.

The principle for which the revolution of 1688 stood was triumphantly vindicated in the celebrated case of Dr. Sacheverell. In the course of a sermon which he had preached, he gave expression to the following sentiment : "The grand security of our Government and the very pillar upon which it stands, is founded upon the steady belief of the subjects' obligation to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme power in all things lawful and the utter illegality of resistance on any pretence whatsoever." This is the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance—the doctrine of law and order which is proclaimed today by every Bureaucrat in the country, foreign or domestic, and which is supposed to be the last word on the subject's duty and Government's rights. But mark how they solved the problem in England in 1710. The Commons impeached Dr. Sacheverell giving expression to a view so destructive of individual liberty, and the Lords, by a majority of votes, found him guilty. The speeches delivered in the course of the trial are interesting. I desire to quote a few sentences from some of those speeches. Sir Joseph Jakyll, in the course of his speech said, that "as the law is the only measure of the Prince's authority, and the people's subjection, so the law derives its being and efficacy from common consent; and to place it on any other foundation than common consent, is to

take away the obligation; this notion of common consent puts both prince and people *under*, to observe the laws. . . My Lords, as the doctrine of unlimited non-resistance was implidly renounced by the whole nation in the revolution, so divers Acts of Parliament afterwards passed, expressing their renunciation. . . . and, therefore, I shall only say that it can never be supposed that the laws were made to set up a despotic power to destroy themselves, and to warrant the subversion of a constitution of a Government which they were designed to establish and defend." Mr. Walpole put the whole argument in a nutshell when he said : "The doctrine of unlimited, unconditional passive obedience was first invented to support arbitrary and despotic power and was never promoted or countenanced by any Government that had not designs, some time or other, of making use of it." The argument against the doctrine of law and order could not be put more clearly or forcibly : for his argument comes to this, the doctrine is not an honest one, if law and order is the process by which absolutism consolidates its powers and strengthens its hand. I will make one more quotation, and that is from the speech of Major-General Stanhope : "As to the doctrine itself of absolute non-resistance it should seem needless to prove by argument that it is inconsistent with the law of reason, with the law of nature, and with the practice of all ages and countries. And indeed, one may appeal to the practice of all churches and of all states and of all nations in the world, how they behaved themselves when they found their civil and religious constitutions invaded and oppressed by tyranny."

This, then, is the history of the freedom movement in England. The conclusion is irresistible that it is not by acquiescence in the doctrine of law and order that the English people have obtained the recognition of their fundamental rights. It follows from the survey that I have made, firstly, that no regulation is law unless it is based on the consent of the people; secondly, where such consent is wanting, the people are under no obligation to obey; thirdly, where such laws are not only not based on the consent of the people but profess to attack their fundamental rights, the subjects are entitled to compel their withdrawal by force or insurrections; fourthly, that law and order is, and has always a plea for absolutism; and lastly, there can be neither law nor order before the real reign of law begins.

I have dealt with the question at some length, as the question is a vital one, and there are many Moderates who still think that

it is the duty of every loyal subject to assist the Government in the maintenance of law and order. The personal liberty of every Indian today depends to a great extent on the exercise by persons in authority of wide, arbitrary or discretionary powers. Where such powers are allowed the rule of law is denied. To find out the extent to which this exploded doctrine of law and order influences the minds of sober and learned men you have only to read the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the Repressive Laws. You will find in the Report neither the vision of the patriot nor the wisdom of the statesman; but you will find an excessive worship of that much advertised, but much misunderstood phrase "Law and Order." Why Regulation III of 1818 to be amended and kept on the Statute Book? Because for the protection of the frontiers of India and the fulfilment of the responsibility of the Government of India in relation to Indian States, there must be some enactment to arm the Executive with powers to restrict the movements and activities of certain persons who, though not coming within the scope of any criminal law, have to be put under some measure of restraint. Why are the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908 and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1911 to be retained on the Statute Book? For the preservation of law and order. They little think, these learned gentlemen responsible for the Report, that these Statutes, giving, as they do to the Executive, wide arbitrary and discretionary powers of constraint, constitute a state of things wherein it is the duty of every individual to resist and to defy the tyranny of such lawless laws. These Statutes in themselves constitute a breach of law and order, for, law and order is the result of the rule of law; and where you deny the existence of the rule of law, you cannot turn round and say: "It is your duty as law-abiding citizens to obey the law."

We have had abundance of this law and order during the last few years of our National History. The last affront delivered to the nation, was the promulgation of an Executive order under the authority of the Criminal Law Amendment Act making the legitimate work of Congress Volunteers illegal and criminal. This was supported by our Moderate friends on the ground that it is the duty of the law-abiding subject to support the maintenance of law and order. The doctrine, as I said before, has travelled all the way from the shores of England. But may I ask: Is there

Bureaucracy.

I have quoted from English history at length because the argument furnished by that history appeals to most people who are frightened by popular movements into raising the cry of "Law and Order," and who think that the development of the great Indian nation must follow the lines laid down in that history. For myself I oppose the pretensions of "Law and Order," not on historical precedent, but on the ground that it is the inalienable right of every individual and of every nation to stand on truth and to offer a stubborn resistance to the promulgation of lawless laws. There was a law in the time of Christ which forbade the people eating on the Sabbath, but allowed the priests to profane the Sabbath. And how Christ dealt with the law is narrated in the New Testament :

> "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ear of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.
>
> "But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred and they that were with him ?
>
> "How he entered into the house of God and did eat the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests ?
>
> "Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and are blameless ?"

The truth is, that law and order is for Man, and not Man for Law and Order. The development of nationality is a sacred task and anything which impedes that task is an obstacle which the very force and power of nationality must overcome. If, therefore, you interpose a doctrine to impede the task, why, the doctrine must go. If you have recourse to law and order to establish and defend the rule of law then your law and order is entitled to claim the respect of all law-abiding citizens; but as soon as you have recourse to it not to establish and defend the rule of law but to destroy and attack it, there is no longer any obligation on us to

respect it, for a Higher Law, the Law of God compels us to offer our stubborn resistance to it. When I find something put forward in the sacred name of law and order which is deliberately intended to hinder the growth, the development, and the selfrealisation of the nation, I have no hesitation whatever in proclaiming that such law and order is an outrage on man and an insult to God.

But though our Moderate friends are often deluded by the battle-cry of law and order, I rejoice when I hear that cry. It means that the Bureaucracy is in danger and that the Bureaucracy has realized its danger. It is not without reason that a false issue is raised; and the fact that false issue has been raised fills me with hope and courage. I ask my countrymen to be patient and to press the charge. Freedom has already advanced when the alarm of law and order is sounded; that is the history of Bureaucracies all over the world.

In the meantime it is our duty to keep our ideal steadfast. We must not forget that we are on the eve of great changes, that world forces are working all around us and that the battle of freedom has yet to be won.

NATIONALISM : THE IDEAL

What is the ideal which we must set before us? The first and foremost is the ideal of nationalism. Now what is nationalism? It is, I conceive, a process through which a nation expresses itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations, but as part of a great scheme by which, in seeking its own expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realisation of other nations as well. Diversity is as real as unity. And in order that the unity of the world may be established it is essential that each nationality should proceed on its own line and find fulfilment in self-expression and self-realisation. The nationality of which I am speaking must not be confused with the conception of nationality as it exists in Europe today. Nationalism in Europe is an aggressive nationalism, a selfish nationalism, a commercial nationalism, of gain and loss. The gain of France is the loss of Germany and the gain of Germany is the loss of France. Therefore French nationalism is nurtured on the hatred of Germany,

and German nationalism is nurtured on the hatred of France. It is not yet realised that you cannot hurt Germany without hurting Humanity, and in consequence hurting France; and that you cannot hurt France without hurting Humanity, and in consequence hurting Germany. That is European nationalism; that is not the nationalism of which I am speaking to you today. I contend that each nationality constitutes a particular stream of the great unity, but no nation can fulfil itself unless and until it becomes itself and at the same time realises its identity with Humanity. The whole problem of nationalism is, therefore, to find that stream and to face that destiny. If you find the current and establish a continuity with the past, them the process of self-expression has begun, and nothing can stop the growth of nationality.

Throughout the pages of Indian history, I find a great purpose unfolding itself. Movement after movement has swept over this vast country, apparently creating hostile forces, but in reality stimulating the vitality and moulding the life of the people into one great nationality. If the Aryans and the non-Aryans met, it was for the purpose of making one people out of them. Brahmanism with its great culture succeeded in binding the whole of India and was indeed a mighty unifying force. Buddhism with its protests against Brahmanism served the same great historical purpose; and from Magadha to Taxila was one great Buddhistic empire which succeeded not only in broadening the basis of Indian unity, but in creating, what is perhaps not less important, the greater India beyond the Himalayas and beyond the seas, so much so that the sacred city where we have met may be regarded as a place of pilgrimage of millions and millions of people of Asiatic races. Then came the Mahomedans of divers races, but with one culture which was their common heritage. For a time it looked as if here was a disintegrating force, an enemy to the growth of Indian nationalism, but the Mahomedans made their home in India, and, while they brought a new outlook and a wonderful vitality to the Indian life, with infinite wisdom they did as little as possible to disturb the growth of life in the villages where, India really lives. This new outlook was necessary for India; and if the two sister streams met, it was only to fulfil themselves and face the destiny of Indian history. Then came the English with their alien culture, their foreign methods, delivering a rude shock to this

growing nationality; but the shock has only completed the unifying process so that the purpose of history is practically fulfilled. The great Indian nationality is in sight. It already stretches its hands across the Himalayas, not only to Asia hut to the whole of the world, not agressively, but to demand its recognition, and to offer its contribution. I desire to emphasise that there is no hostility between the ideal of nationality and that of world peace. Nationalism is the process through which alone will world peace come. A full and unfettered growth of nationalism is necessary for world peace just as a full and unfettered growth of individuals is necessary for nationality. It is the conception of aggressive nationality in Europe that stands in the way of world peace; but once the truth is grasped that it is not possible for a nation to inflict a loss on another nation without at the same time inflicting a loss on itself, the problem of Humanity is solved. The essential truth of nationality lies in this, that it is necessary for each nation to develop itself, express itself and realise itself, so that Humanity itself may develop itself, express itself and realise itself. It is my belief that this truth of nationality will endure although, for the moment, unmindful of the real issue the nations are fighting amongst themselves; and, if I am not mistaken, it is the very instinct of selfishness and self-preservation which will ultimately solve the problem, not the narrow and the mistaken selfishness of the present but a selfishness universalized by intellect and transfigured by spirit, a selfishness that will bring home to the nations of the world that in the efforts to put down their neighbours lies their own ruin and suppression.

We have, therefore, to foster the spirit of Nationality. True development of the Indian nation must necessarily lie in the path of Swaraj. A question has often been asked as to what is Swaraj. Swaraj is indefinable and is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. There is all the difference in the world between Swaraj and Swarajya. Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind. The full outward expression of that mind covers, and must necessarily cover, the whole life history of a nation. Yet it is true that Swaraj begins when the true development of a nation begins, because as I have said, Swaraj is the expression of the national mind. The question of nationalism, therefore, looked at from another point of view, is the same question as that of Swaraj. The question of all questions in India

today is the attainment of Swaraj.

NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION

I now come to the question of method. I have to repeat that it has been proved beyond any doubt that the method of Non-violent Non-cooperation is the only method which we must follow to secure a system of Government which may in reality be the foundation of Swaraj. It is hardly necessary to discuss the philosophy of Non-cooperation. I shall simply state the different viewpoints from which this question may be discussed. From the national point of view the method of Non-cooperation means the attempt of the nation to concentrate upon its own energy and to stand on its own strength. From the ethical point of view, Non-cooperation means the method of self-purification the withdrawal from that which is injurious to the development of the nation, and therefore, to the good of humanity. From the spiritual point of view, Swaraj means that isolation when in the language of Sadhana is called "pratyahar" – that withdrawal from the forces which are foreign to our nature—an isolation and withdrawal which is necessary in order to bring out from our hidden depths the soul of the nation in all her glory. I do not desire to labour the point, but from every conceivable point of view, the methods of Non-violent Non-cooperation must be regarded as the true method of "following in the path of Swaraj."

FORCE AND VIOLENCE

Doubt has, however, been expressed in some quarters about the soundness of the principle of Non-violence. I cannot refuse to acknowledge that there is a body of Indian opinion within the country as well as outside according to which Non-violence is an ideal abstraction incapable of realization, and that the only way in which Swaraj can ever be attained is by the application of force and violence. I do not for a moment question the courage, sacrifice and patriotism of those who hold this view. I know that some of them have suffered for the cause which they believe to be true. But may I be permitted to point out that, apart from any question of principle, history has proved over and over again the utter futility with violence, the pupular party was violence ? I

am one of those who hold to Non-violence on principle. But let us consider the question of expediency. Is it possible to attain Swaraj by violent means? The answer which history gives is an emphatic "No." Take all the formidable revolutions of the world.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The history of the French Revolution is the history of a struggle at the first instance between the Crown and the Nobility on one side and the Representative Assemblies with armed Paris on the other. Book took to violence, one to the bayonet and the other to the pike. The pike succeeded because the bayonet was held with uncertain hands. And then, as is usual after the victory gained with violence, the popular party was sharply divided between two sections—the Girondins and the Jacobins. Again there was an appeal to force. The Girondins asked the provinces to rise in arms, the Jacobins asked Paris to rise in arms. Paris being nearer and stronger, the Girondins were defeated and sent to the guillotine—the Jacobins seized the power. But it did not take them many months to fall out among themselves. First Robespierre and Danton sent Hebert and Chaumette to the guillotine, then Robespierre sent Danton to the guillotine. Robespierre in his turn was guillotined by Collot, Billaud and Tallien. These men, again were banished by others to the far off South America. If there was a slight difference of views between the Girondins and the Jacobins—there was practically none between the different sections of the Jacobins. The whole question was which of the various sections was to rule France. Force gave way to stronger force and at last under Napoleon France experienced a despotism similar to if not worse than the despotism of Louis XIV. As regards liberty there was not more liberty in France under the terrible Committee of Public Safety and Napoleon than under Louis XIV or Louis XV. The law of Prairial was certainly much worse than Lettres de Cachet. And the people—? On the Pont au Change, on the Place de Greve, in long sheds, Mercier, at the end of the revolution, saw working men at their repast. One's allotment of daily bread had sunk to an ounce and-a-half. "Plates containing each three grilled herrings, sprinkled with shorn onions, wetted with a little vinegar;

to this add some morsel of boiled prunes, and lentils swimming in a clear sauce; at these frugal tables I have seen them ranged by the hundred; consuming, without bread, their scant messes, far too moderate for the keenness of their appetite, and the extent of their stomach." "Seine water," remarks Carlyle grimly, "rushing plenteous by, will supply the deficiency," One cannot forget the exclamation of Carlyle in this connection :

> "O Man of Toil, Thy struggling and thy daring, these six long years of insurrection and tribulation, thou hast profited nothing by it, then ? Thou consumest thy herring and water, in the blessed gold-red of evening. O why was the Earth so beautiful, becrimsoned with dawn and twilight, if man's dealings with man were to make it a vale of scarcity, of tears, not happiness but tears ? Destroying of Bastilles, discomfiting of Brunswicks, fronting of Principalities and Powers, of Earth and Tophet, all that thou hast dared and endured—was it for a Republic of the Salons ? Aristocracy of Feudal parchment has passed away with a mighty rushing; and now, by a natural course, we arrive at Aristrocracy of the Moneybag. It is the course through which all European Societies are, at this hour, travelling. Apparently a still baser sort of Aristocracy. An infinitely baser—the basest yet known."

Even today France is plodding her weary way towards Swaraj.

REVOLUTIONS IN ENGLAND

The history of England proves the same truth. The revolution of the Barons in 1215 took away or purported to take away the power from the King; but the power fell into the hands of the aristocracy, and democracy did not share in the triumph of the Barons. Thus, the great Charter, as a great historian has observed, was not a Charter of Liberty but of liberties. The revolution in the reign of Charles I produced a new dictator who suppressed freedom. The work which the Long Parliament began was interrupted by the revolution which followed the execution of the King, and it required another revolution, this time a bloodless

revolution, to complete the work, I deny that the work is yet complete. The continual class war and the obvious economic injustice do not proclaim that freedom which England claimed for herself. I maintain that no people has yet succeeded in winning freedom by force and violence. The truth is that love of power is a formidable factor to be reckoned with, and those who secure that power by violence will retain that power by violence. The use of violence degenerates them who use it, and it is not easy for them, having seized the power, to surrender it. And they find it easier to carry on the work of their predecessor, retaining their power in their own hands. Non-violence does not carry with it that degeneration which is inherent in the use of violence.

REVOLUTIONS IN ITALY AND RUSSIA

The Revolutions in Itlay and Russia illustrate the same principle. The Italian Revolution inipired by Mazzini and worked out by Garibaldi and Cavour, did not result in the attainment of Swaraj. The freedom of Italy is yet in the making, and the men and women of Italy are today looking forward to another revolution. If it results in a war of violence it will again defeat its purpose, but only to allow Freedom and Non-violence to triumph in the end.

The recent revolution in Russia is very interesting study. The shape which it has now assumed is due to the attempt to force Marxian doctrines and dogmas on the unwilling genius of Russia. Violence will again fail. If I have read the situation accurately I expect a counter revolution. The soul of Russia must struggle to free herself from the socialism of Carl Marx. It may be an independent movement, or it may be that the present movement contains with itself the power of working out that freedom. In the meantime the fate of Russia is trembling in the balance.

NON-VIOLENT NON-COOPERATION THE ONLY METHOD

I believe in revolutions, but I repeat, violence defeats freedom. The revolution of Non-violence is slower but surer. Step by step the soul of the nation emerges and step by step the

nation marches on in the path of Swaraj. The only method by which Freedom can be attained, in India at any rate, is the method of Non-violent Non-cooperation. Those who believe this method to be impracticable would do well to ponder over the Akali movement. When I saw the injuries of the wounded at Amritsar and heard from their lips that not one of them had even wished to meet violence by violence inspite of such grave provocation, I said to myself: "Here was the triumph of Non-violence."

Non-violence is not an idle dream. It was not in vain that Mahatma declared: "Put up thy sword into the sheath." Let those who are "of the truth" hear his voice as those others heard a mightier voice twa thousand years ago.

The attempt of the Indian nation to attain Swaraj by this method was, however, met by severe repression. The time has come for us to estimate our success as well as our failure. So far as repression is concerned, it is easy to answer the question. I have not the least doubt in my mind that the nation has triumphed over the repression which was started and continued to kill the soul of the movement.

SUCCESS OF NON-VIOLENT NON-COOPERATION

But the question, which agitates most minds, is as to whether we have succeeded in our work of Non-violent Non-cooperation. There is, I am sorry to say, a great deal of confusion of thought behind the question. It is assumed that a movement must either succeed or fall, whereas the truth is that human movements—I am speaking of genuine movements—neither altogether succeed nor altogether fail. Every genuine movement proceeds from an ideal, and the ideal is always higher than the achievement. Take the French Revolution. Was it a success? Was it a failure? To predicate either would be a gross historical blunder. Was the Non-cooperation movement in India a success? Yes, a mighty success when we think of the desire for Swaraj which it has succeeded in awakening throughout the length and breadth of this vast country. It is a great success when we think of the practical result of such awakening, in the money which the nation contributed, in the enrolment of members of the Indian National Congress and in the boycott of foreign cloth. I go further and say that the practical achievement also consists of

the loss of prestige suffered by Educational Institutions and the Courts of Law and the Reformed Councils throughout the country. If they are still resorted to, it is because of the weakness of our countryment.The country has already expressed its strong desire to end these institutions. Yet it must be admitted that from another point of view, when we assess the measure of our success in the spirit of Arithmetic, we are face to face with "the petty done" and "the undone vast." There is much which remains to be accomplished. Non-violence has to be more firmly established. The work of Non-cooperation has to be strengthened, and the field of Non-cooperation has to be extended. We must be firm but reasonable. The spirit of sacrifice has got to be further strengthened, and we must proceed with the work of destruction and creation more vigorously than before. I say to our critics : I admit we have failed in many directions, but will you also not admit our success where we have succeeded ?

CHARGE OF CORRUPTING THE YOUTH

We have been denounced by the Moderates for having corrupted the youth of the country. It has been asserted that we have taught sons to disobey their fathers, the pupils their teachers, and the subject the Government. We plead guilty to the charge, and we rely upon every spiritual movement as argument in our support. Christ himself was tried for having corrupted the people, and the answer which he gave in anticipation is as emphatic as it is instructive :

> "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I come not to send peace, but a sword.
> "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against his mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

CHARGE OF HYPOCRISY

It has been said that with love on our lips we have been preaching the gospel of hatred. Never was such a vile slander uttered. It may be we have failed to love, it may be we lost ourselves, some of us, in hatred, but that only shows our weakness and imperfectness. Judge us by our ideal, not by what we have

achieved. Wherever we have fallen short of that ideal put it down to our weakness. On behalf of the Indian National Congress I deny the charge of hypocrisy. To those who are ever anxious to point out our defects, I say with all humility : "My friends, if we are weak, come and join us and make us stronger. If the leaders are worthless, come and join us to lead and the leaders will stand aside. If you do not believe in the ideal, what is the use of always criticising us in the light of that ideal ?" We need no critic to tell us how far we have fallen short of that ideal. Evidence of weakness has met me from every direction in which I have looked; but in spite of our defects of human weakness, of human imperfection, I feel bold enough to say that our victory is assured and that the Bueaucracy knows that our victory is assured.

HOW TO APPLY THE METHOD OF NON-VIOLENT NON-COOPERATION

But though the method of Non-violent Non-cooperation is sure and certain, we have now to consider how best to apply that method to the existing circumstances of the country. I do not agree with those who think that the spirit of the nation is dead, that Non-violent Non-cooperation is no longer possible. I have given the matter my earnest thought, and I desire to make it perfectly clear that there is absolutely no reason for entertaining any feelings of doubt or despair. The outward appearance of the people today is somewhat deceptive. They appear to be in a tire condition and a sense of fatigue has partially overcome them. But beneath all this exterior of quietude, the pulse of the nation beats as strongly as before and as hopefully as at the beginning of this movement. We have to consolidate the strength of the nation. We have to devise a plan of work which will stimulate their energy so that we can accelerate our journey towards Swaraj. I shall place before you one by one the items of work which, in my opinion, the Indian National Congress should prescribe for the nation.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

It should commence its work for the year by a clearer declaration of the rights of the different communities in India under the

Swaraj Government. So far as the Hindus and the Madomedans are concerned there should be a clear and emphatic confirmation of what is known as the Lucknow Compact, and along with that there should be an emphatic recognition of each other's rights, and each should be prepared to undergo some kind of sacrifice in favour of the other. Let me give an instance to make my meaning clear. Every devout Mussalman objects to any music in front of a mosque, and every devout and orthodox Hindu objects to cows being slaughtered. May not the Hindus and the Mussalmans of India enter into a solemn compact so that there may not be any music before any mosque and that no cows may be slaughtered ? Other instances may be quoted. There should be a scheme of a series of sacrifices to be suffered by each community so that they may advance shoulder to shoulder in the path of Swaraj. As regards the other Communities such as Sikhs, Christians and Parsees, the Hindus and the Mahomedans who constitute the bulk of the people should be prepared to give them even more than their proportional share in the Swaraj administration. I suggest that the Congress should bring about real agreement between all these communities by which the rights of every minority should be clearly recognised in order to remove all doubts which may arise and all apprehensions which probably exist. I need hardly add that I include among Christians not only pure Indians, but also Anglo-Indians and other people who have chosen to make India their home. Such an agreement as I have indicated was always necessary but such an agreement is specially necessary in view of the work which faces us today.

FOREIGN PROPAGANDA

I further think the policy of exclusiveness which we have been following during the last two years should now be abandoned. There is in every country a number of people who are selfless followers of liberty and who desire to see every country free. We can no longer afford to lose their sympathy and co-operation. In my opinion, there should be established Congress Agencies in America and in every European country. We must keep ourselves in touch with world movements and be in constant communication with the lovers of freedom all over the world.

THE GREAT ASIATIC FEDERATION

Even more important than this is the participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation, which I see in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement, which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic people. It is the union of the oppressed nationalities of Asia. Is India to remain outside this union ? I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and cooperation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world is destined to bring about world peace. World peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation in the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage. The policy which we have hitherto pursed was absolutely necessary for the concentration of the work which we took upon ourselves to perform, and I agreed to that policy whole-heartedly. The hope of the attainment of Swaraj or a substantial basis of Swaraj in the course of the year made such concentration absolutely necessary. Today that very work demands broader sympathy and a wider outlook.

DEMAND FOR PUNJAB WRONGS, KHILAFAT, SWARAJ, ETC.

We are on the eve of great changes, and the world forces are upon us. The victory of Kemal Pasha has broken the bond of Asia, and she is all astir with life. It is Prometheus who "spoke within her" and her "thoughts are like the many forests of vale through which the might of whirlwind and of rain had passed." The stir within every European country for the real freedom of the people has also worked a marvellous transformation in the mentality of subject races. That which was more or less a matter of ideal has now come within the range of practical politics. The Indian nation has found out its bearings. At such a time as this, it is necessary for us to reconsider and to re-state our demands. Our demands regarding the Punjab wrongs have got to be restated because many of them have already been realised; our demands regarding Khilafat have got to be reconsidered because some of

them have already been worked out, and we hope that before the Lausanne Commission has finished its work very little of it will remain unrealised. Our demand for Swaraj must now be presented in a more practical shape. The Congress should frame a clear scheme of what we mean by a system of Government which may serve as a real foundation for Swaraj. Hitherto, we have not defined any such system of Government. We have not done so advisedly as it was on the psychological aspect of Swaraj that we concentrated our attention. But circumstances today have changed. The desire is making us impatient. It is, therefore, the duty of the Congress to place before the country a clear scheme of the system of Government which we demand. Swaraj, as I have said, is indefinable and is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. Yet the national mind must express itself, and although the full outward expression of Swaraj covers the whole life history of a nation, the formulation of such a demand cannot be any further delayed.

SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

It is hardly within the province of this address to deal with any detailed scheme of any such Government. I cannot, however, allow this opportunity to pass without giving you an expression of my opinion as to the character of that system of Government. *No system of Government which is not for the people and by the people can ever be regarded as the true foundation of Swaraj.* I am firmly convinced that a parliamentary Government is not a Government by the people and for the people. Many of us believe that the Middle Class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If today the British Parliament grants provincial autonomy in the provinces with responsibility in the Central Government, I, for one, will protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the Middle Class. I do not believe that the Middle Class will then part with their power. How will it profit India, if in place of the White Bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian Bureaucracy of the middle classes. Bureaucracy is Bureaucracy, and I believe that the very idea of Swaraj is inconsistent with the existence of a Bureaucracy.

My ideal of Swaraj will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate with us in its attainment. Any other attempt will inevitably lead to what Europen Socialists call the "Bourgeoise" Government. In France and in England and in other European countries it is the Middle Class who fought the battle of freedom, and the result is that power is still in the hands of this class. Having usurped the power they are unwilling to part with it. If today the whole of Europe is engaged in a battle of real freedom it is because the nations of Europe are gathering their strength to wrest this power from the hands of the Middle Class. I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world—Swaraj by Non-violence and Swaraj by the people.

To me the organisation of village life and the practical autonomy of small local centres are more improtant than either provincial autonomy or central responsibility ; and if the choice lay between the two, I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local centres. I must not be understood as implying that the village centres will be disconnected units. They must be held together by a system of Co-operation and Integration. For the present, there must be power in the hands of the Provincial and the Indian Government ; but the ideal should be accepted once for all, that the proper function of the central authority, whether in the Provincial or in the Indian Government is to advise, having a residuary power of control only in case of need, and to be exercised under proper safeguards. I maintain that real Swaraj can only be attained by vesting the power of Government in these local centres, and I suggest that the Congress should appoint a Committee to draw up a scheme of Government which would be acceptable to the nation.

The most advanced thought of Europe is turning from the false individualism on which European culture and institutions are based to what I know to be the ideal of the ancient village organisation of India. According to this thought modern democracy of the ballot box and large crowds has failed, but real democracy has not yet been tried. What is the real democracy of modern European thought ?

The foundation of real democracy must be laid in small centres—not gradual decentralisation which implies a previous centralisation—but a gradual integration of the practically

autonomous small centres into one living harmonious whole. What is wanted is a human state, not a mechanical contrivance. We want the growth of institutions and organisations which are really dynamic in their nature and not the more static stability of a centralised state.

This strain of European thought found some expression in the philosophy of Hegel, according to whom "human institutions belong to the region, not of inert externality, but of mind and purpose, and are, therefore, dynamic and self-developing."

Modern European thought has made it clear that from the individul to the "unified state," it is one continous proces of real and natural growth. Sovereignty (Swaraj) is a relative notion. "The individual is sovereign over himself"—attains his Swaraj —"in so fas as he can develop, control and unify his manifold nature." From the individual we come to "integrated neighbourhood" which is the real foundation of the unified state which again in its turn gives us the true ideal of the world-state. This integrated neighbourhood is great ideal more than the mere physical contiguity of the people who live in the neighbourhood area. It requires the evolution of what has been called neighbourhood "consciousness." In other words, the qeestion is : "How can the Force generated by the neighbourhood life become part of out whole civic and national life ?" It is the question which now democracy takes upon itself to solve.

The process prescribed is the generaration of the collective will. The democracy which obtains today rests on an attempt of securing a common will by a process of addition. This really means a war of wills, the issue being left to be decided by a mere superiority of numbers. New democracy discountenance this process of addition, and insists on the discovery of detailed means and methods by which the different will of a neighbourhood entity may grow into one common collective will. This process is not a process of addition but of integration, and the consciousness of the neighbourhood thus, awakened must express the common collective will of that neighbourhood entity. The collective wills of the several neighbourhood centres must by a similar process of integration be allowed to evolve the common collective will of the whole nation. It is only thus, by a similar process of integration, that any league of nations may be real and the vision of a world state may be realized.

The whole of this philosophy is based on the idea of the evolution of individval. The ideas is to "release the powers of the individual." Ordinary nations of state have little to do with true individualism, i.e., "with the individual as consciously responsible for the life from which he draws his breath and to which he contributes his all According to this school of thought "representative Government, party organisation majority rule, with all their excrescences are dead-wood. In their stead must appear the organisation of Non-partisan groups for the be getting the bringing into being, of common ideas, a common purpose and the collective will." This means the true development and extension of the individual self. The institutions that exist today have made machines of men. No Government will be successful, no true Government is possible which does not rest on the individual. "Up to the present moment," says the gifted authoress of the "New State," "we have never seen the individual yet. The search for him has been the whole long striving of our Anglo-Saxon history. We sought him though the method of represntation and failed to find him. We sought to reach him by extending the suffrage to every man and then to every woman and yet he eludes us. Direct Government now seeks the individual." In another place the same writer says : "Thus, group organisation releases us from the dominion of mere numbers, thus, democracy transcends time and space. It can never be understood except as a spiritual force. Majority rule rests on numbers ; democracy rests on the well grounded assumption that society is not a collection of units, but a net-work of human relations Democracy is not worked out at the polling booths ; it is the bringing forth of a genuine collective will, one to which every single being must contribute the whole of his complex life as one which every single being must express the whole of at one point. Thus the essence of democracy is creating, The technique of democracy is group organisation." According to this school of thought no living state is possible without the development and the extension of the individual self. State itself is no static unit. Nor is it on arbitrary creation. "It is a process; a continual self-modification to express its different stages of growth in which each and all must be so flexible that continual change of from is twin-fellow of continual growth." This can only be realised when there is a clear perception that individuals and groups and the nation stand in no antithesis. The integration

of all these into one conscious whole means and must necessarily mean the integration of the wills of individuals into the common and collective will of the entire nation.

The general trend of European thought has not accepted the ideal of this new democracy. But the present problems which are agitating European seem to offer no other solution. I have every little doubt that this ideals which appears to many practical political politicians as impracticable will be accepted as the real ideal at no distant future. "There is little yet," I again quote from the same author, "that is practical in practical politics."

The fact is that all the progressive movements is Europe have suffered because of the want of a really spiritual basis and it is refreshing to find that this writer has seized upon it. To those who think that the neighbourhood group is too puny to serve as a real fundation of Self-Governmet which is practically true, and what is and only so far as we rise out of it do we approach the sacred life ? Then no wonder politics are what they have become. But this is not the creed of men today ; we believe in the sacredness of our life ; we believe that Divinity is for ever incarnating in Humanity, and so we believe in Humanity and the common daily life of all men."

There is thus a great deal of correspondence between this view of life and the view which I have been endeavouring to place before my countrymen for the last 15 years. For the truth of all truths is that the outer "Leela" of God reveals itself in history. Individual, Society, Nation, Humanity are the different aspects of that very "Leela" and scheme of Self-Government which is practically true, and what is really practical can be based on any other Philosophy of life. It is the realisation of his truth which is the supreme necessity of the hour. This is the soul of Indian thought, and this the ideal towards which the recent thought of Europe is slowly but surely advancing.

To frame such a scheme of Government regard must, therefore, be had—

(1) to the formation of local centres more or less on the lines of the ancient village system of India;
(2) the growth of larger and larger groups out of the integration of these village centres;
(3) the unifying state should be the result of similar growth;

(4) the village centres and the larger groups must be practically autonomous; and

(5) the residuary power of control must remain in the central Government but the exercise of such power should be exceptional and for that purpose proper safeguard should be provided, so that the practical autonomy of the local centres may be maintained and at the same time the growth of the central Government into a really unifying state may be possible. The ordinary work of such central Government should be mainly advisory.

As a necessary corollary to what I have ventured to suggest as the form of Government which we should accept, I think that the work of organising these local centres should be forthwith commenced. The modern sub-divisions or even smaller units may be conveniently taken as the local centres, and large centres may be conveniently formed. Once we have our local areas—"the neighbourhood group"—we should foster the habit of corporate thinking, and leave all local problems to be worked out by them. There is no reason why we should not start the Government by these local centres today. They would depend for their authority on the voluntary co-operation of the people, and voluntary co-operation is much better than the compulsory co-operation which is at the bottom of the Bureaucratic role in India. This is not the place to elaborate the scheme which I have in mind; but I think it is essentially necessary to appoint a Committee with power not only to draw up a scheme of Government but to suggest means by which the scheme can be put in operation at once.

BOYCOTT OF COUNCILS

The next item of work to which I desire to refer is the boycott of Councils. Unhappily the question has become part of the controversy of Change or No-change. To my mind the whole controversy proceeds on a somewhat erroneous assumption. The question is not so much as to whether there should be a change in the programme of the work; the real question is whether it is not necessary now to change the direction of our activities in certain respect for the success of the very movement which we hold so dear. Let me illustrate what I mean. Take the Bardoli Resolution

In the matter of boycott of schools and colleges the Bardoli Resolution alters the direction of our activity, which does not in any way involve the abandonment of the boycott. During the Swaraj year the idea was to bring the students out of Government schools and colleges, and if National schools were started they were regarded as concessions to the "weakness" of those students. The idea was, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "political" and not "educational." Under the Bardoli Resolution, however, it is the establishment of schools and colleges which must be the main activity of national education. The idea is "educational," and if it still be the desire of the Congress to bring students out of Government schools and colleges, it is by offering them education advantages. Here the boycott of schools and colleges is still uphold, but the direction of our activities in changed. In fact, such changes must occur in every revolution, violent or non-violent, as it is only by such changes that the ideal is truly served.

In the next place, we must keep in view the fact that according to unanimous opinion of the members of the Enquiry Committee, Civil Disobedience on a large scale is out of question because the people are not prepared for it.

I confess that I am not in favour of the restrictions which have been put upon the practical adoption of any system of civil disobedience, and in my opinion, the Congress should abolish those restrictions. I have not yet been able to understand why to enable a people to civilly disobey particular laws, it should be necessary that at least 80 per cent. of them should be clad in pure "Khadi." I am not much in favour of general Mass Civil Disobedience. To my mind, the idea is impracticable. But the disobedience of particular laws which are eminently unlawful, laws which are the creatures of "Law and Order," laws which are alike an outrage on humanity and an insult to God—disobedience of such laws is within the range of practical politics and in my opinion, every attempt should be made to offer disobedience to such laws. It is only by standing on truth that the cause of Swaraj may prevail. When we submit to such laws, we abandon the plank of truth. What hope is there for a nation so dead to the sense of truth as not to rebel against lawless laws, against regulations which injure their national being and hamper their national development ?

I am of opinion that the question of the boycott of Council

which is agitating the country so much must be considered and decided in the light of the circumstances I have just mentioned. There is no opposition in idea between such civil disobedience as I have mentioned and the entry into the Councils for the purpose, and with the avowed object of either ending or mending them. I am not against the boycott of Councils. I am simply of opinion that the system of the Reformed Councils with their steel frame of the Indian Civil Service covered over by a dyarchy of deadlocks and departments, is absolutely unsuitable to the nature and genius of the Indian nation. It is an attempt of the British Parliament to force a foreign system upon the Indian people. India has unhesitatingly refused to recognise this foreign system as a real foundation for Swaraj. With me, as I have often said, it is not a question of more or loss; I am always prepared to sacrifice much for a real basis of Swaraj, nor do I attack any importance to the question as to whether the attainment of full and complete independence will be matter of 7 years or 10 years or 20 years. A few years is nothing in the life history of a nation. But I maintain that India cannot accept a system such as this as a foundation of our Swaraj. These Councils must, therefore, be either mended or ended. Hitherto we have been boycotting the Councils from outside. We have succeeded in doing much—the prestige of the Councils is dimished, and the country knows that the people who adorn those chambers are not the true representatives of the people. But though we have succeeded in doing much, these Councils are still there. It should be the duty of the Congress to boycott the Councils more effectively from within. Reformed Councils are really a mask which the Bureaucracy has put on. I conceive it to be our clear duty to tear this mask from off their face. The very idea of boycott implies, to my mind, something more than mere withdrawal. The boycott of foreign goods means that such steps must be taken that there may be no foreign goods in our markets. The boycott of the Reformed Councils, to my mind, means that such steps must be taken that these Councils may not be there to impede the progress of Swaraj. The only successful boycott of these Council is either to mend them in a manner suitable to the attainment of Swaraj or to end them completely. That is the way in which I advise the nation to boycott the Councils.

A great deal of discussion has taken place in the country as to whether the boycott of Councils in the sense in which I mean it, is

within the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation. I am emphatically of opinion that it does not offend against any principle of Non-cooperation which has been adopted and applied by the Indian National Congress. I am not dealing with logical or philosophical abstractions. I am only dealing with that which the Congress has adopted and calls Non-co-operation. In the first place may I point out that we have not up to now non-cooperated with the Bureaucracy ? We have been merely prepared the people of this country to offer Non-cooperation. Let me quote the Nagpur resolution on Non-cooperation in support of my proposition. I am quoting only the portions which are relevant to this point :

> "Whereas as the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country, and, whereas the people of India are now determined to establish Swaraj. . . . now this Congress. . . . declares that the entire or any parts of the scheme of Non-violent Non-cooperation with the renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end, and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put into force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress, or the All-India Congress Committee and that, in the meanwhile to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf."

Then follows the effective steps such as, national education, boycott of law courts, boycott of foreign goods, etc., which must be taken "in the meanwhile." It is clear, therefore, that the Congress has not yet advocated the application of Non-cooperation but has merely recommended certain steps to be taken, so that, at some time or other, to be determined by the Congress, the Indian nation may offer Non-cooperation. In the second place, let us junge of the character of this principle, not by thinking any of logical idea or philosophical abstraction, but by gathering the principle from the work, it is clear to my mind, that the Congress was engaged in a two-fold activity. In everything that the Congress commanded there is an aspect of destruction as there is an aspect of creation. The boycott of lawyers and law courts means the destruction of existing legal institutions; and the formation of Panchayats means the creation of agencies through which justice

may be administered. The boycott of schools and colleges means the destruction of the department of Education; and the establishment of National schools and colleges means the creation of educational institutions for the youth of India. The boycott of foreign goods followed as it was by the burning of foreign cloth means the destruction of the foreign goods already in the country and the preventing, in future, of foreign goods coming into the country. But on the other hand, the spinning wheel and the looms mean creative activity in supplying the people with indigenous cloth. Judged by this principle, what is wrong about the desire either to convert the Councils into institutions which may lead us to Swaraj, or to destroy them altogether ? The same two-fold aspect of creation and destruction is to be found in the boycott of Councils in the way I want them to be boycotted.

It has also been suggested that it offends against the morality and spiritulaity of this movement. Let us take the two points separately. As regards the question of morality apart from the ethics of Non-co-operation, it has been urged that entering the Councils for the purpose of ending the Councils is unfair and dishonest. The argument implies that the Reformed Councils belong entirely to the Bureaucracy and the idea is that we should not enter into other people's property with a view to injure it. To my mind, the argument is based on a misconception of facts. Inadequate as the Reforms undoubtedly are, I do not for a moment admit that the Reforms Act was a gift of the British Parliament. It was, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "a concession to popular agitation." The fact is that it is the resultant of two contending forces, the desire of the people for freedom and the desire of the Bureaucracy to oppose such desire. The result is that it has travelled along lines neither entirely popular nor entirely bureaucratic. The people of India do not like these Reforms, but let us not forget that the Bureaucracy does not like them either. Because it is the result of two contending forces pulling in different directions, the Reforms have assumed a tortured shape. But so far as the rights recognised are concerned, they are our rights—our property—and there is nothing immoral or unfair or dishonest in making use of the rights which the people have extorted from the British Parliament. If the fulfilment of the very forces which have succeeded in securing the Reforms require that the Councils should either be mended or ended, if the struggle for freedom

compels the adoption of either course, what possible charge of immorality can be levelled against it ? I admit if we had proposed to enter the Councils stealthily with the avowed object of co-operation but keeping within our hearts the desire to break the Councils, such a course would undoubtedly have been dishonest European diplomacy, let us hope has been abolished by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. If we play now, we play with all our cards on the table.

But some people say that it is immoral from the point of view of Non-cooperation, because it involves an idea of destruction. The work of Non-cooperation according to these patriots—I have the highest reverence for them—is only to build our national life ignoring altogether the existence of the Bureaucracy. It may be an honest ideal, and logically speaking, it may be the inner meaning of Non-cooperation. But the Non-cooperation which the Congress has followed is not so logical and I claim that if the principle of Non-cooperation is to be advanced as a test of my programme, let it be the same principle which the Congress has accepted, adopted and applied. As I have already said, that principle countenances destruction as well as creation. As a matter of fact, circumstanced as we are with the Bureaucracy to the right and the Bureaucracy to the left, Bureaucracy all round us, it is impossible to create without destroying; nor must it he forgotten that if we break, it is only that we may build.

It has also been suggested that the very entry into the Councils is inconsistent with the ideal of Non-cooperation. I confess I do not understand the argument. Supposing the Congress had sanctioned an armed instruction, could it be argued that entry into the fort of the Bureaucracy is inconsistent with the principle of Non-cooperation ? Surely the charge of inconsistency must depend on the object of the entry. An advancing army does not cooperate with the enemy when it marches into the enemy's territory. Cooperation or Non-cooperation must, therefore, depend on the object with which such entry is made. The argument, if analysed, comes to this that whenever the phrase "entry into Councils" is used it calls up the association of co-operation, and then the mere idea of this entry is proclaimed to be inconsistent with Non-cooperation. But this is the familiar logical allacy of four terms. Entry into the Councils to cooperate with the Government and entry into the Councils to Non-co-

operate with the Government are two terms and two different propositions. The former is inconsistent with the idea of Non-cooperation, the latter is absolutely consistent with that very idea.

Next let us understand the opposition from the point of view of the spirituality of our movement. The question of spirituality is not to be confused with the dictates of any particular religion. I am not aware of the injunctions of any religion against entering the Councils with a view either to trend them or end them. I have heard from many Mahomedans that the Koran lays a own no such injunction. Other Mahomedan friends have told me that there may be some difficulty on that ground, but that is a matter with regard to which I am not competent to speak. The Khilafat must answer that question with such assistance as they may obtain from the Ulemas. It is needless to point out that should the Ulemas come to the conclusion that under the present circumstances it would be an offence against their religion to enter the Councils the Congress should unhesitatingly accept their decision, because no work in this country towards the attainment of Swaraj is possible without the hearty cooperation of both Hindus and Mussalmans. But I am dealing with that spirituality which does not affect any particular creed or any particular religion. Judged from the stand-point of such spirituality what objection can there be in removing from our path by all legitimate means any obstacle to the attainment of Swaraj ? We burned foreign cloth without a scruple, and the spirituality of the movement did not receive a shock when we burned them. It is as well to start with a clear conception as to what that spirituality is. Apart from any creedal or doctrinal injunction and apart from any question of morality the basis of spirituality must be the attainment of freedom and of Swaraj. What is the duty which every human being owes not only to humanity, but also to his God ? It is the duty of living in the light of God. Shortly after my release from imprisonment I said in a public speech that all our national activities should be based on truth. Ever since that day questions and conundrums have been put to me. I have been asked to define what is truth. It has also been suggested that because I dared not tell the truth that I took refuge under the general expression. I still insist that our national activities must be based on truth. I repeat that I do not believe in politics, or in making water-tight compartments of

our national life which is an indivisible organic whole. I repeat that as you cannot define life, you cannot define truth. The test of truth is not logical definition. The test of truth lies in its all-compelling force in making itself felt. You know truth when you have felt it. God can not be defined, nor can truth, because truth is the revelation of God. Two thousand years ago, a jesting judge asked the same question of the Son of God. He made no answer by word of mouth; but he sacrificed himself and Truth was revealed. When I speak of spirituality I speak of the same truth. I look upon history as the revelation of God. I look upon human individual personality, nationality and humanity each contributing to the life of the other as the revelation of God to man. I look upon the attainment of freedom and Swaraj the only way of fulfilling oneself as individuals, as nations. I look upon all national activities as the real foundation of the service of that greater humanity which again is the revelation of God to man. The Son of God brought to the world not peace but a sword—not the peace of death and immorality and corruption but the "separating sword" of Truth. We have to flight against all corruptions and all immorality. It is only thus, that freedom can be attained. Whatever obstacles there may be in the path of Swaraj either of the individual or of the nation, or humanity at large, these obstacles must be removed by the individual if he desires his freedom, by the nation if that nation desires to fulfil itself, by all the nations of the world if the cause of humanity is to prosper. That being the spirituality of the movement as I understand it I am prepared to put away all obstacles that lie between the Indian nation and the attainment of its freedom, not stealthily but openly, reverently in the name of truth and God. Judged from this ideal of spirituality the entry into the Councils for the purpose I have stated is necessary to advance the cause of truth. Everything in connection with the controversy must be judged by that standard.

At present the question before the country put by those members of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee who are in favour of Council-Entry is simply that the members of the Congress should stand as candidates. It is unnecessary, therefore, to go into other questions raised, such as in the matter of taking oath, the probability or otherwise of securing a majority and so on. With regard to the question of oath all that I need say at present is this, that apart from the dictates of any particular

religion which I do not propose to deal with, the question does not present any difficulty at all. The oath is a constitutional one. The King stands for the Constitution. Great changes in the constitution have taken place in England under that very oath. Now, what is the oath ? It binds those who take it—first not to make any use of powers which are not allowed by the Reforms Act; secondly to discharge their duties faithfully. So far as the first point is concerned, there is nothing in my suggestion which militates against it. So far as the second point is concerned, I am aware that a forced interpretation has been sought to be put upon It, namely, that a member taking the oath is bound to discharge his duties faithfully to the Bureaucracy. All that I need say is, that there is no constitutional authority of any kind to justify that interpretation. To my mind, the words mean a faithful discharge of a member's duties to his constituency by the exercise of powers recognised under the Reforms Act. I do not, therefore, understand what possible objection there may be to take the oath. But there again the question does not arise at present.

Various other questions have been asked as to whether it is possible to secure a majority and as to what we should do supposing we are in a majority. I think it possible that having regard to the present circumstances of the country. the Non-cooperators are likely to get the majority. I am aware of the difficulty of the franchise, I am aware of the rules which prevent many of us from entering the Councils; but manking every allowance for all these difficulties, I believe that we shall be in the majority. But here also the question doesn't arise till we meet in the Congress of 1923 when the matter may be discussed not on suppositions but on actualities.

As regards the question as to what we should do if we have the majority, the answer is clear. We should begin our proceedings by a solemn declaration of the existence of our inherent right, and by a formal demand for a constitution which would recognise and conserve those rights and give effect to our claims for the particular system of Government which we may choose for ourselves. If our demands are accepted, then the fight is over. But, as I have often said, if it is conceded that we are entitled to have that form of Government which we may choose for ourselves, and the real beginning is made with that particular form of

Government in view, then it matters nothing to me whether the complete surrender of power is made to us today, or in five years or even in twenty years. If, however, our demand is not given effect to, we must non-cooperate with the Bureaucracy by opposing each and every work of the Council. We must disallow the entire Budget. We must move the adjournment of the House on every possible occasion; and defeat every Bill that may be introduced. In fact we must so proceed that the Council will refuse to do any work unless and until our demands are satisfied. I am aware of the large powers of Certification which Governors can exercise under the Reforms Act. But Government by Certification is just as impossible as Government by Veto. Such procedure may be adopted on a few occasions. The time must soon come when the Bureaucracy must yield or withdraw the Reforms Act. In either case it is a distinct triumph for the nation, and either course if adopted by the Bureaucracy will bring us nearer to the realisation of our ideal.

Another question is often asked : Suppose we end these Reformed Councils—what then ? Could not the same question be asked with regard to every step the Congress has hitherto undertaken in the way of breaking, of destroying institutions. If we had succeeded in destroying the Educational Department, might not somebody ask : What then ? If we had succeeded in destroying the legal institutions, might not the question be put with equal relevance ? The fact is, destruction itself will never bring us Swaraj. The fact further is that no construction is possible without destruction. We must not forget that it is not this activity or that activity which by itself can bring Swaraj. It is the totality of our national activity in the way of destruction and in the way of creation that will bring Swaraj. If we succeed in demolishing these Reformed Councils you will find the whole nation astir with life. Let them put other obstacles in our way; we shall remove them with added strength and greater vitality.

It has also been suggested that the Bureaucracy will never allow the Non-cooperators to enter the Councils,—they will alter the rules to prevent such entry. I cannot conceive of anything better calculated to than this. If any such rule is framed I should welcome it and again change the direction of our activity. The infant nation in India requires constant struggle for its

growth and development. We must not forget that a great Non-violent Revolution is on the land, and we shall change the direction of our activities as often as circumstances require it. Today the Councils are open and we must attack them,—tomorrow if the Councils are closed, we must be prepared to deal with the contingency when it arises. What do we do when it pours with rain ? We turn our umbrella in the direction from which the water comes. It is in the same way that we must turn the direction of our activities whenever the fulfilment of our national life demands it.

The work of the Councils for the last two years has made it necessary for Non-cooperators to enter the Councils. The Bureaucracy has received added strength from these Reformed Councils, and those who have entered the Councils, speaking generally, have practically helped the cause of Bureaucracy. What is most necessary to consider is the fact that the taxation has increased by leaps and bounds. The expenditure of the Government of India has grown enormously since the pre-War year 1913-14. In that year the total expenditure of the Government of India amounted to 79 crores and 37 lakhs; in 1919-20, it rose to 138 crores, and in 1920-21, the first year of the reformed system of administration, it stood at 149 crores. The expenses of the current year are likely to even higher. To meet the successive increases in expenditure additional taxation was levied in 1916-17, 1917-18, 1919-20, 1921-22, and 1922-23. We may prepare ourselves for proposals for further additional taxation in the ensuing year. Inspite of the levy of additional taxation, seven out of the last nine years have been years of deficit.

The increase in military expenditure is chiefly responsible for the present financial situation. In 1913-14, the expenses of this department amounted to about 31½ crores, in 1919-20, after the conclusion of the War, they mounted up to 87½ crores, and in 1920-21, they stood at 88½ crores. As Sir Visvesvaraya remarks, the expenses under the head "Civil Administration" also have shown a perpetual tendency to increase. As a part and parcel of the Reform Scheme, the emoluments of the members of the Indian Civil Service the Indian Educational Service, the Indian Medical Service and of all the other services recruited in England have been enormously increased; and to maintain some kind of fairness the salaries of the subordinate services which are manned by

Indians have also been increased.

The financial situation in the provinces is not much better. Under the financial arrangements of the Reform Scheme, the provinces of India, taken together, secured an accession to their resources of about 11 crores of rupees. Besides the provinces had between them in 1920-21 a total accumulated balance of 21 crores and 68 lakhs. But so great has been the increase in provincial expenditure during the last two years that even those provinces which had hoped to realise large surpluses are now on the verge of bankruptcy. In the first year of the Reform Era, most of the provinces were faced with deficits and were just able to tide over their financial difficulties by drawing upon their balances. But, in the current year, the financial situation in many of the provinces has become worse. The Burma Budget shows a deficit of 1 crore and 90 lakhs, the Punjab, 1 crore 30 lakhs, Behar and Orissa, 51 lakhs, Madras, 41 laks, the United Provinces, 27 lakhs, the Central Provinces, 37 lakhs. The deficit of the Madras Government would have been much higher had it not taken steps to increase its revenues by 77½ lakhs from fresh taxation. The Bengal statement shows an estimated surplus owing to the remission of the Provincial contribution to the Central Government and expected receipts from fresh taxation amounting to 1 crore and 40 lakhs. But it is very doubtful if the expectation will be realised and early next year, further fresh taxes are likely to be imposed. Assam has budgetted for a deficit of 14½ lakhs after the imposition of additional taxation. Proposals fur further taxation are under consideration in the Punjab, Behar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and Assam. In the United Provinces the proposals brought forward by the Government were rejected by the Legislative Council.

I warn my countrymen against the policy of allowing these Reformed Councils to work their wicked will. There will undoubtedly be a further increase of taxation and there is an apprehension in my mind. I desire to express it with all the emphasis that I can command, that if we allow this policy of drift to continue the result will be that we shall lose the people who are with us today. Let us break the Councils if the Bureaucracy does not concede to the demands of the people. If there is fresh taxation, as it is bound to be, let the responsibility be on the Bureaucracy. Then you and I and the people will jointly fight the powers that be.

LABOUR ORGANISATION

I am further of opinion that Congress should take up the work of Labour and Peasant organisation. With regard to Labour there is a resolution of the Nagpur Congress, but I am sorry to say that it has not been acted upon. There is an apprehension in the minds of some Non-cooperators that the cause of Non-cooperations will suffer if we exploit Labour for Congress purposes. I confess again I do not understand the argument. The word "exploitation" has got an ugly association, and the argument assumes that Labour and Peasants are not with us in this struggle for Swaraj. I deny the assumption. My experience has convinced me that Labour and the Peasantry of India today are, if anything, more eager to attain Swaraj than the so-called middle and educated classes. If we are "exploiting" boys of tender years and students of colleges, if we are "exploiting" the women of India, if we are "exploiting" the whole of the middle classes irrespective of their creed and caste and occupation, may I ask what justification is there for leaving out the Labourers and Peasants ? I suppose the answer is that they are welcome to be the members of the Congress Committees but that there should not be a separate organisation of them. But Labour has got a separate interest and it is often oppressed by the foreign capitalists, and the Peasantry of India is often oppressed by a class of men who are the standard-bearers of the Bureaucracy. Is the service of this special interest in any way antagonistic to the service of nationalism ? To find breed for the poor, to secure justice to the class of people who are engaged in a particular trade or avocation—how is that work any different from the work of attaining Swaraj ? Anything which strengthens the national cause, anything which supports the masses of India is surely as much a matter of Swaraj as any other item of work the Congress has in mind. My advice is that the Congress should lose no time in appointing a Committee, a strong workable Committee, to organise Labour and the Peasantry of India. We have delayed the matter already too long. If the Congress fails to do its duty, you may expect to find organisations set up in the country by Labourers and Peasants detached from you, dissociated from the cause of Swaraj which will inevitably bring, within the arena of the peaceful revolution, class struggles and the war of special interests. If the object of the Congress be to avoid that disgraceful issue let us take Labour and the Peasantry in hand, and let us

organise them both from the point of view of their own special interest and also from the point of view of the higher ideal which demands satisfaction of their special interest and the devotion of such interest to the cause of Swaraj. Here again we have to make use of the selfishness of Labourers and Peasants, as we know that the fulfilment of the very selfishness requires just and proper contribution to the life of the nation.

WORK ALREADY TAKEN UP

I now turn to the work which the Congress has already taken up. I may at once point out that it is not my desire that any work which the Congress has taken up should be surrendered. The change of direction which I advocate and the other practical change which I have mentioned is not by way of surrendering anything that is already on the plank—but it is simply by way of addition.

Boycott of Schools and Colleges

I am firmly of opinion that the boycott of schools and colleges should be carried on as effectively as before. I differ from the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee when they propose the abandonment of the withdrawal of boys from such Sehools and Colleges. The question to my mind is of vital importance. It is on the youth of the country that the cause of Swaraj largely depends and what chance is there for a nation which willingly, knowingly sends its boys, its young men to Schools and Colleges to be stamped with the stamp of slavery and foreign culture ? I do not desire to enter into the question more minutely. I have expressed my views on the subject so often that I find it unnecessary to repeat them. I, however, agree with the recommendations of the Enquiry Committee that National Schools and Colleges should also be started.

Boycott of Law Courts and Lawyers

With regard to the question of the boycott of lawyers and legal institutions, I agree with the main recommendations of the Committee. Many questions have been raised as to whether the right of defence should be allowed or not, and on what occasions, and for what purposes. I have never been in love with formal

rules and I think it impossible to frame rules which will cover all the circumstances which may arise in particular cases. All that I desire to insist on, is the keeping in view of the principle of the boycott of the courts.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

With regard to the questions of Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability and such matters, I agree with the recommendation of the Enquiry Committee. I desire to point out, however, that true unity of all sections of the Indian nation can only be based on a proper cooperation and the recognition by each section of the rights of the others—that is why I propose that there should be a compact between the different sections, between the different communities of India. We will do little good to the section known as Untouchables if we approach them in a spirit of superiority. We must engage them in the work before us and we must work with them side by side and shoulder to shoulder.

KHADDAR

I now come to the question of Khaddar which I regard as one of the most important questions before us. As I have already said, I am opposed to the manufacture of Khaddar on a commercial basis. I said among other things when I seconded the Bezwada Resolution on the 31st March 1921 proposed by Mahatma Gandhi :

> "Our reason in asking the people to take to the Charkha was not based upon any desire to enter into any competition with foreign capitalist production either from without or from within. Our idea is to enable the people to understand and fashion for themselves their economic life and utilize the spare time of their families and opportunities with a view to creative more economic goods for themselves and improve their own condition."

The idea is to make the people of this country self-reliant and self-contained. This work is difficult but essencial and should be carried on with all our strength. I would much rather that a few families were self-contained than factories were started on a large

scale. Such factories represent a short-sighted policy, and there is no doubt that though it would satisfy the present need it will create an evil which it would be difficult to eradicate. I am naturally opposed to the creation of a new Manchester in India of which we have had sufficient experience. Let us avoid that possibility, if we can.

It is often stated that Khaddar alone will bring us Swaraj. I ask my countrymen in what way as it possible for Khaddar to lead us to Swaraj ? It is in one sense only that the statement may be true. We must regard Khaddar as the symbol of Swaraj. As the Khaddar makes us self-contained with regard to a very large department of our national life, it is hoped that the inspiration of Khaddar will make the whole of our national life self-contained and independent. That is the meaning of the symbol. To my mind, such symbol worship requires the spreading out of all Non-co-operation activities in every possible direction. It is thus, and only thus that the speedy attainment of Swaraj is possible.

CONCLUSION

It remains to me to deliver to you a last message of hope and confidence. There is no royal road to Freedom, and dark and difficult will be the path leading to it. But dauntless is your courage, and firm your resolution; and though there will be reverses, sometimes severe reverses, they will only have the effect of speeding your emancipation from the bondage of a foreign Government. Do not make the mistake of confusing achievement with success. Achievement is an appearance and appearances are often deceptive. I contend that, though we cannot point to a great deal as the solid achievement of the movement, the success of it is assured. That success was proclaimed by the Bureaucracy in the repeated attempts which were made, and are still being made, to crush the growth of the movement, and to arrest its progress, in the refusal to repeal some of the most obnoxious of the repressive legislations, in the frequent use that has been made of the arbitrary or discretionary authority that is vested in the executive government, and in sending to prison our beloved leader who offered himself as a sacrifice to the wrath of the Bureaucracy. But though the ultimate success of the movement is assured, I warn you that the issue depends wholly on you, and on how you

conduct yourselves in meeting the forces that are arrayed against you. Christianty rose triumphant when Jesus of Nazareth offered himself as a sacrifice to the excessive worship of law and order by the Scribes and the Pharisees. The forces that are arrayed against you are the forces, not only of the Bureaucracy, but of the modern Scribes and Pharisees whose interest it is to maintain the Bureaucracy in all its pristine glory. Be it yours to offer yourselves as sacrifices in the interest of truth and justice, so that your children's children may have the fruit of your sufferings. Be it yours to wage a spiritual warfare so that the victory, when it comes, does not debase you, nor tempt you to retain the power of Government in your own hands. But if yours is to be a spiritual warfare, your weapons must be those of the spiritual soldier. Anger is not for you, hatred is not for you; nor for you is pettiness, meanness or falsehood. For you is the hope of dawn and the confidence of the morning, and for you is the song that was sung of Titan, chained and imprisoned, but the Champion of Man, in the Greek fable :

> "To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory."

Bande Mataram

9

THE CALL OF THE MOTHERLAND*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

MAHATMAJI'S INTRODUCTION

I must apologise to the public for the delay in issuing Deshabandhu Das's presidential address. It was received by me in a fragmentary condition with instructions to revise it and put it in shape. The reader will be glad to learn that beyond restoring one sentence which had been ruled out and adding one to complete a thought and beyond slight verbal immaterial alterations, the address is being printed as received. I see from the sentences ruled out in the original that Deshabandhu's intention was to give a review of the year's work and his considered opinion in detail of Non-cooperation. But sufficient appears in the printed text to enable us to know his opinion. We know it too from his emphatic and stirring messages to the country just before he was silenced. In appreciating the address the reader will be helped to know that it was prepared just before his arrest. The reader will not fail to note the marked self-restraint with which the address is prepared and also the fact that Deshabandhu believes in non-violence as his final creed. That the only use the Goverment has for such a man is to put him in prison is about the greatest condemnation it can pronounce upon itself.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

We have arrived at a critical stage in our struggle with the

*Undelivered Presidential Address for the Session of the Congress held at Ahmedabad in December, 1921.

Bureaucracy and it behaves us, every one of us to search our hearts and to ask ourselves the question : "Do I stand for India in her present struggle ? It is because I stand for India that I have responded to your unanimous call today. I thank you for your confidence in me but I warn you that I have no wordly wisdom to offer you. I come from a city which has felt the full force of the wrath of the Government. Measures for stifling political life have been taken, as I believe, in order to coerce the people to receive His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; but it is the imprisoned soul of Calcutta that will greet His Royal Highness on the 24th December. I come from the struggle which has just begun in Calcutta chastened and purified and, if I have no wordly wisdom to give, I at least bring before you unbounded enthusiasm, and a resolute determination to see this struggle through.

I think that at the very outset we ought to define our attitude in relation to the present struggle. What is our aim ? Whither are we going ? I think that most people will agree that we are out to secure freedom from foreign subjection, freedom from foreign interference. It is as well, however, that we should have a clear grasp of what is meant by the word "Freedom." In the first place it does not imply absence of all restraint. When I am forbidden to steal my neighbour's purse or to trespass on my neighbour's land there is necessarily a restraint on my action, but there is no opposition between freedom and such restraint as has the sanction of the people behind it. In the second place, freedom does not necessarily imply absence of the idea of dependence. Dependence there must be so long as we live in society and need the protection of society and there is no necessary opposition between freedom and such dependence as is willingly suffered by the people. But though there is no necessary opposition between freedom and restraint and freedom and dependence, it mnst be remembered that restraint that does not deny freedom can only be such restraint as has the sanction of the people behind it; and dependence consistent with freedom can only be such dependence as is willingly suffered by the people for its own protection.

What is Freedom ?

What then is freedom ? It is impossible to define the terem;

but one may describe it as that state, that condition, which makes it possible for a nation to realize its own individuality and to evolve its own destiny. The history of mankind is full of stirring stories as to how nations have struck for freedom in order to keep their nationalism and their individuality inviolate and untarnished. To take only modern instances, one may refer to Finland and Poland, Ireland, Egypt and India. Each of these nations has offered a determined resistance to the imposition of a foreign culture upon it. The history of these nations has run on parallel lines. First, there is the protest against cultural conquest; secondly, there is the desire for national education; and lastly, there is the demand for its recognition as a separate organism with the power to work out its own destiny without any hindrance from any foreign power.

We stand then for freedom, because we claim the right to develop our own individuality and evolve our own destiny along our own lines, unembarrassed by what Western cirvilisation has to teach us and unhampered by the institution which the West has imposed on us. But here a voice interrupts me, the voice of Rabindranth, the poet of India. He says : "The Western culture is standing at our door, must we be so inhospitable as to turn it away or ought we not to acknowledge that in the union of the cultures of the East and the West is the salvation of the world ?" I admit that if Indian nationalism has to live, it cannot afford to isolate itself from other nations but I have two observations to make to the criticism of Rabindranath; first, we must have a house of our own before we can receive a guest; and secondly, Indian culture must discover itself before it can be ready to assimilate Western culture. In my opinion, there can be by true assimilation basore freedom comes, although there may be. as there has been. a slavish imitation. The cultural conquest of India is all but complete; it was the inevitable result of her political conquest. India must resist it. She must vibrate with national life and then we may talk of the union of the two civilizations.

An Objection

I must dispose of another abjection, this time, of my Moderate friends. "You concede," I hear them say, "that freedom is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, the end

being control; why not work out your destiny within the British Empire ?" My answer is that so long as India occupies the position of a dependant in the British Empire, so long the task cannot be undertaken. Go into the village, the heart of India, and see the life that is lived by the average Indian. They are sturdy men and fearless men, they are men of whom any country could be proud; but the degradation that must inevitably follow subjection is writ large on their brow, and their lot is made up of casts troubles, petty squabbles, and endless pursuit of litigation for litigation's sake. Where are now the institutions than made them self-dependent and self-contained ? Where is the life that enabled them to earn their livelihood and yet left them free to worship the God of their fathers ? I assert that once a nation passes into subjection, degeneration must inevitably set in attacking the very life blood of that nation. Its effect is to be seen not in this sphere or that sphere but in every sphere of the nation's activity. Economically, the British rule has had a disastrous effect on our national well-being. Mr. R.C. Dutt and after him Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya have shown how deliberately the destruction of our national industry, the spinning and weaving industry, was planned. Who can contemplate with equanimity that every year many crores of rupees go out of India without corresponding advantage ? Morally, was are becoming a nation of slaves, and have acquired most vices of the slave. We speak the language of the master, and ape his manners; and we rush with alacrity to adopt his institutions while our own institutions lie languishing in the villages. Intellectually, we have become willing victims to the imposition of a foreign culture on us; and the humiliation is complete when we are deliberatebly breaking away from the past, recognising no virture in its continuity. "But then," say my Moderate friends, "How can you hope to win freedom until you have elevated the people ?" If I am right in my diagnosis that the present condition of India, material moral and intellectual, is the direct result of the foreign rule in India, then it must follow that so long as our subjection continues, so long there is no hope of recovery. You may of course tackle side problems, as we are trying to do. You may infuse such enthusiasm amongst the people as may be of great assistance to you in your political campaigns. But, believe me, it is the disease that you must fight, and not the outward

symptoms of the disease.

I object then to the perpetuation of British domination as in my opinion it is impossible to find the fulfilment of our nationality, our individuality, our personality so long as that domination continues. In arriving at this conclusion, I have entirely ignored the character of the British rule in India. That rule may be good or bad, it may be conceded that it is parly bad, but my conclusion is based on the view that there is inherent in subjection something which injures national life and hampers its growth and self-fulfilment. Whether within the Empire or outside it, India must have freedom so that she may realize her individuality and evolve her destiny without help or hindrance from the British people.

I now come to the question : What are the methods which we ought to adopt in our fight with the Bureaucracy ?

There are three and only three methods that I know of— (1) armed resistance, (2) cooperation with the Bureaucracy in the Councils that have been established under the Government of India Act, and (3) Non-violent Non-cooperation. The first I must dismiss as beyond the range of practical politics. Even if it were not so on principle I am opposed to violence. We must then choose between Co-opetation and Non-cooperation.

I confess that in considering the question of cooperation, I am not a little troubled by the fact that some of our leaders who assisted at the birth of political life in India are ranged against us on this question.

I, therefore, propose to consider some of the arguments that are advanced by the supporters of the Government of India Act; and, in doing so, I shall consider, first, whether the freedom of the Indian nation, that is to say, its right to develop its own individuality and evolve its own destiny, has been recognised in the Act; secondly, whether the Act either expressly or by necessary implication gives even the beginning of responsible government to the Indian people, and lastly, whether the legistature has any control, effective or otherwise, over the purse.

Reforms Act and Real Self-Government

Now the preamble of the Act is the key to the situation, "Whereas it is the declared policy of Parliament"—so the preamble runs What is the declared policy of Parliament ? To recognise

the inherent right of the Indians to responsible government ? Not at all. To recognise the inherent right of India to be treated as a free and equal partner of the commonwealth of nations known as the British Empire ? Not at all. But mark the timid concession to the rights of India—"To provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, and with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire". I do not think a more halting concession could ever be made to the rights of a people. Now is there anything in the preamble to compel the British Parliament to recognise India, at any time, as a free and equal partner of the British Empire ? I think not. "Progressive realization of responsible government in British India"—these are vague words, and they will not at any time tax the ingenuity of a British statesman. Omitting the second paragraph and coming to the third, we find that the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples. Mark the word "peoples," not "people," an assertion by Parliament that India is not one, but many. I, for one, am not prepared to submit to the insult offered to India in the third paragraph of the preamble, and I am bound to offer a valiant opposition to it. We are quite prepared to undertake the responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people (not peoples), and I altogether deny that a foreign Parliament can possibly discharge its responsibilities in relation to a subject nation. I resent the doctrine that Parliament is to determine the time and manner of each advance, and I say that the whole object of the legislation, as disclosed in the third paragraph of the preamble, is to perpetuate the domination of the British Parliament which I cannot for a moment accept. The fourth paragraph holds out a distinct threat. "And whereas the action of Parliament", so it says, "in such matters must be guided by the cooperation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility." In other words, if we are good, and if we satisfy the British Parliament that we have a sense of responsibility then the British Parliament will consider whether we ought not to have a further instalment of Reforms. In other words, we are

perpetual infants, and the British Parliament is our sole guardian.

I have very great respect for the opinion of any political opponents, but I cannot accept the fundamental principle on which the Reforms are based. I think that we should preserve our self-esteem, whatever the stage of our progress may be. I think that we should solemnly declare, in open Congress, that Freedom is inherent in every nation and that India has and possesses the right to develop her own individuality and to evolve her own destiny unhampered by what the British Parliament has decided or may decide for us. I think that we should recognize that any power that in any way hampers or embarrasses the self-realization and self-fulfilment of the Indian Nation is an enemy of India and must, as such, be resisted. I am willing to co-operate with England but on one condition only, that she recognizes this inherent right of India. That recognition you will not find anywhere in the Government of India Act, and I, for one, will not be a party to the perpeutation of British domination in India. But my Moderate friends tell me that though the freedom of the Indian people, in the sense in which I understand the term, has not been recognised in the Act of Parliament, still if we work the Reforms, it will not be in the power of Parliament to deny us freedom. I do not doubt the wisdom of my friends nor deny their patriotism; but the question, in my opinion, is entirely irrelevant. My position is this, that however, willing I may be to enter into a compromise with the English Government in matters of detail, and I am willing to make great sacrifices, I will not enter into any compromise on the question which I hold to be fundamental, Freedom is my birthbright, and I demand a recognition of that right, not by instalments nor in compartments, but whole and entire. I do not doubt that victory will be on our side. But supposing we fail, we would at least have preserved inviolate our national self-respect and dignity. We would at any rate have repudiated the insult on which the Government of India Act is based. The difference between the Indian National Congress and the Ministers who are working the Reform Act seems to me to be fundamental, in that it has its eye fixed on the ultimate and would reject as essentially false anything that does not recognize the freedom of the Indian people, whereas the Ministers have their eyes fixed on the departments of which they are in charge, and hope to attain freedom through the successful working of those departments.

I will now consider whether the Act gives even the beginning of responsible government to India, and whether the Legislature has any control over the purse. The two questions must be considered together. It is the view of the Moderates in Bengal that out of seven members of the Bengal Government, five are Indians. The view is entirely erroneous. I think I am right in saying that provinces are governed, in relation to reserved subjects, by the Governor in Council, and in relation to transferred subjects, by the Governor acting with the Ministers. The statute makes no provision whatever for the joint deliberation by the Governor and his Council and his Ministers sitting together, except in regard to proposals for taxation and borrowing, and the framing of proposals for expenditure of public money. In regard to the reserved subjects—and these are the subjects which are of vital importance to us as a nation in our struggle for political liberty—the Ministers have no voice whatsoever. I think I am right in saying that they are the dumb spectators of the fight that is now going on between us and the Government. They are not part of the Government to consider whether, in relation to the Non-cooperation movement, a repressive policy should or should not be initiated in the country. Their advice will not be sought when the Local Government has to consider the question whether Mahatma Gandhi ought or ought not to be arrested. If I am right in my view as to the position of subjects, then I suggest to my Moderate friends that they are under an entire misapprehension when they say that the majority of the members of the Government are Indians. The truth is that, in relation to the Reserved Subjects, the Indian element is in a minority and cannot affect the policy of the Government in the slightest degree, provided the Governor and the English members of the Council combine against it.

The Position of the Ministers

I have now to consider the position of the Ministers and the relation between the Ministers and the Legislature in regard to the Transferred Subjects. My first point is, that it is a mistake to suppose that any "subject" has been transferred to the Ministers. I concede that certain departments have been transferred, but I maintain that they have been transferred, subject to the encumbrances created by a century of bureaucratic rule, and the

Ministers have no power whatever to discharge those encumbrances. I will at once make my meaning clear. Now medical administration is an important department of the State; and so is public health. These departments, I understand, have been transferred to the Ministers, and the Minister, provided he has complete control of the "subject", is in a position to confer a lasting benefit on the community. But what is the position ? The Minister has no effective control over the officers who run these departments, and no voice whatsoever in the selection of his own officers. It is a peculiar circumstance in the history of the bureaucratic rule in India that, whenever the people have tried for something essential to their existence, the Government has given them expensive administration, expensive offices and expensive buildings instead. The test whether the "subject" has been transferred to the Minister is this; Is the Minister for health under the law in a position to take up this attitude, "I will recast the whole system under which these departments have hitherto been administered. I will abolish the Indian Medical Service, and employ local agencies who would know how to disinfect a well and what steps to take in the case of an epidemic. I will then have more money to spend on the needs of the people." But, no ! This attitude the Act denies to him, and yet it is said that the subject has been transferred to him. One of the Ministers in India described his position in bitter terms in the course of a debate in the Council. He complained that if he applies to the Medical department or the Sanitary department for doctors to meet an emergency, they say to him in reply : "We have no doctors." If he takes the responsibility of sending doctors to the affected area, the Medical department says to him : "We do not recognise your doctors, and you must pay them out of your own pocket." When I point out to you that the Minister in question is the Minister in charge of the Medical department and Sanitary department, you will grasp the full significance of the "transfer of subjects" that has taken place under the Act. Well might a Minister exclaim, as one actually did : "Silver and gold have I none, out of such as I have I give unto thee, that is, sympathy." He added that he could only give sympathy, because the purse was held by somebody else, that is to say, the Finance Member.

This brings me to a question of great importance, and that is, whether the legislature has any control over the purse. The Moderates maintain the affirmative of the proposition; I maintain

the negative. I shall presently refer to the provisions of the Act to support my position; but I have a witness of undoubted position and respectability in my favour, whose evidence I should like to place before you. In the course of the general discussion on the Budget in one of the Councils, a Minister said as follows : "The two poor men who have been put down here as Ministers are presumed to be clothed with all the powers of Ministers in the House of Commons, and therefore, they are called upon to account for everything for which perhaps a Minister in the House of Commons is responsible. . . . The Minister here begins his life by getting a dole of money that is given by those who are in charge of the whole administration." The question is whether the Moderates are right or the Minister in question is right. Both may be wrong; but both cannot be right.

Under the rules framed under the Government of India Act, the framing of proposals for expenditure in regard to Transferred and Reserved subjects is a matter of agreement between the Members of the Executive Councils and the Ministers; but, if they do not agree as to the apportionment of funds between Reserved and Transferred departments respectively, the Governor has the power to allocate the revenue and balances of the province between reserved and transferred subjects by specifying the fractional proportion of the revenues and balances which shall be assigned to each class of subjects. What, then, is the position ? The Moderates proudly assert that majority of the members of the Government, five, are Indians. If that were so, one would expect the question of appointment to be decided in accordance with the view of the majority; but that is not done, because the entire scheme is based on distrust of the Ministers. We have, therefore, this result that if the Members and the Ministers are unable to come to an agreement the matter is decided by the Governor who may act either in accordance with his own discretion or in accordance with the report of an authority to be appointed by the Governor-General in this behalf on the application of the Governor.

That is the impossible position in which the Minister is placed by the scheme framed under the Act; but what is the position of the Council ? Has it any power to say : "We require the funds to be apportioned in the way we suggest, and not according to the proposal made by the Government"? Can it

say: "We require you to spend so much to fight Malaria or so much for Primary Education"? The Act undoubtedly gives power to the Council to refuse its assent to a demand or to reduce the amount therein referred to either by a reduction of the whole grant or by the omission or reduction of any of the items of expenditure of which the grant is composed, but this is subject to an important provision, viz., that the Local Government shall have power, in relation to any such demand, to act as if it had been assented to, notwithstanding the withholding of such asset or the reduction of the amount therein referred to, if the demand relates to a reserved subject, and the Governor certifies that the expenditure provided for by the demand is essential to the discharge of his responsibility for the subject. This, according to the Moderates, is the effective control which the Legislature has over the purse! It has no power whatever to say in what proportion the revenue of the country should be allocated between reserved and transferred departments respectively; it has no control whatever over the revenue allocated to the reserved subjects. All that it can do is to say to the Ministers: "We refuse our assent to your demand," or "We reduce the amount referred to in your demand either by a reduction of the whole grant or by the omission or reduction of any of the items of expenditure of which the grant is composed." It is ridiculous to describe the limited control exercisable by the Council in relation to the transferred subjects as "un effective control over the purse."

In administrative matters, the position of the Minister is no better. The Act provides that in relation to transferred subjects, the Governor shall be guided by the advice of his Minister, unless he sees sufficient cause to dissent from their opinion, in which case he may require action to be otherwise than in accordance with that advice. In a dispute between the Minister in charge of the department of health and his officer on a question of policy it is possible for Governor to support the officer against the Minister. In matters of legislation in relation to the transferred subjects, there is in theory some power in the legislature, but in practice the Finance department, controlled by a member of the Executive Council, would have the last word on the subject; for I can conceive of no legislation which does not involve expenditure of

I feel bound to answer the questions which have been raised by our friendly critics, and, in doing so, I must ask myself the question: "What is Non-co-operation?" I find it easier to answer the question "What is Non-co-operation" by considering for a moment what is not Non-co-operation. Non-co-operation is not a refusal to coperate with the English people because they are English people. Non-co-operation does not advocate a policy of separation, a policy of isolation. Indeed, in our conflict with the forces of injustice and unrighteousness, we are not for getting Him, to quote the words of Rabindra Nath, "who is without distinction of class or colours, and who with his varied Sakti makes true provision for inherent need of each and every class." But before we can join the forces of the world in the missionary enterprise to uplift Humanity, it is at least necessary that we should find fulfilment in self-realization and self-development; for it is only as a nation that has realized itself that we can hope to be of any service to Humanity. Let us consider the matter for a moment. Our philosophy recognizes that there is an essential unity behind all diversities and that these diversities. "Baichitrya" if I may use that expression, constitute the "Leela" of the Supreme Reality. The whole object of human endeavours, as I understand it, is to reconcile these endless diversities so as to affirm the Supreme Reality. God's "Leela" requires that each and every manifestation must have an unhampered growth. Every nation on the face of the earth represents such a manifestation. Like the diverse flowers in a garden the nations must follow their own laws and work out their own destiny so that in the end they might each and all contribute to the life and culture of Humanity in order that that Humanity may be served, the ultimate Unity realized, that essential something which distinguishes one nation from another, which I may describe as the individuality of the nation, must have unfettered growth. This is the essence of the doctrine of nationalism for which men have been ready to lay down their lives. Nationalism is not an aggressive assestion of its individuality distinct and separate from the other nations, but it is a yearning for self-fulfilment and self-determination and self-realization as a part of the scheme of the universal Humanity by which alone Humanity can fulfil itself, determine itself and realize itself. Non-cooperation, therefore, though it does not refuse cooperation with the English because they are English,

will refuse to co-operate with any power or institution which embarrasses in any way the growth of the individuality of the Indian Nation or hampers its self-fulfilment. Non-cooperation again does not reject Western culture because it is Western culture. But it recognizes that there must be rejection in order that there may be whole-hearted acceptance. The cry for national education education is not a protest against foreign education; it was not in so Poland; it was not so in Ireland; it is not so in India. But it is a protest against the imposition of foreign culture on India. Subjection is hard to bear, whether it is political or cultural; and indeed, as history shows, cultural subjection must inevitably follow in the wake of political subjection. Our desire for national education is only an endeavour to establish a continuity with the past and to enthrone our culture in our hearts. The doctrine that we preach does not exclude any light that may come from outside; but we say to those who care to listen to us : "First light the lamp that lies neglected in your home; look into the past and realise your present position in the light of the past; and then face the world with courage and receive whatever light may come from outside."

What then is Non-cooperation ? I can not do better than quote the eloquent words of Mr. Stokes : "It is the refusal to be a party to preventable evil; it is the refusal to accept or have any part in injustice; it is the refusal to acquiesce in wrongs that can be righted, or to submit to a state of affairs which is manifestly inconsistent with the dictates of righteousness. And as a consequence it is the refusal to work with those who on grounds of interest or expediency insist upon committing or perpetuating wrong."

But it is argued that the whole doctrine is a doctrine of negation, a doctrine of despair. I agree that in form the doctrine is one of negation, but I maintain that in substance it is one of affirmation. We break in order to build; we destroy in order to construct; we reject in order to accept. This is the whole history of human endeavours. If subjection be an evil, then we are bound to non-cooperate with every agency that seeks to perpetuate our subjection. That is a negation; but it affirms our determination to be free to win our liberty at any cost. Nor do I agree that the doctrine is one of despair. It is a doctrine of hope and of confidence and of unbounded faith in its efficacy.

One has only to look at the faces of the sufferers as they are led to prison to realise that victory is already ours. It is not for nothing that Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, courageous and resourceful, have lived and suffered, it is not for nothing that Lajpat Rai, one of the bravest of spirits that ever faced the sun, flung the order of the Bureaucracy in its face, and marched boldly into the prison that awaited him. It is not for nothing that Moti Lal Nehru, that prince amongst men, spurned the riches that were his, and defied the order that would enslave him, refusing no pain that power could invent. Time will not permit me to read to you all the names that are inscribed in the roll of honour; but I must not forget to mention the students, who are at once the hope and the glory of the Motherland. I, who have been privileged to watch the current of political life in its very centre, can testify to the wonderful courage and unflinching devotion displayed by the students. Theirs is the inspiration behind the movement, theirs the sacrifice, theirs the victory. They are the torch-bearers of the time; they are the pilgrims on the road. If suffering has been their lot, victory is their due.

This, then, is the philosophy on which the Non-co-operation movement is based : to defy with absolute constancy the hostile powers that would hamper in any way our growth and self-fulfilment as a nation, to keep its evil always in view, not hating it, but recognizing the evil as an evil, and refusing no pain that power can invent. I admit, gentlemen, that the ideal is a very high one but I maintain that it is the only method which we can adopt for the early establishment of Swaraj. It requires no wisdom to see that if every one of us withdraws our helping hand from the machine that is relentlessly working to prevent our growth and self-relization as a nation, the machine must of necessity stop its work. We are told, however, that once the machine of government stops its work, we shall be swept away by the forces of disorder and reaction. I think, gentlemen, that there is a simple answer to this argument. The Non-co-operation movement can never hope to succeed, unless our forces are properly organized and the ethics of the movement properly understood by the nation. If they are not understood, the question will not arise, for we cannot hope to carry the struggle to a successful termination; but if they are understood, then the inherent strength of the movement will

prevent anarchy and bloodshed. But I cannot disguise from myself the fact that there have been disturbances in Bombay in the course of our propaganda. We must accept responsibility for such disturbances and frankly admit that to the extent to which there has been violence, intimidation, and coercion, we have failed. But what is the remedy. Surely not to abjure our faith, but to see that the faith is properly understood. Bloodshed and disorder have been associated with every great movement that has taken place, the spread of Christianity for instance. But is it to be argued that because, in the spread of a New Idea, there is danger of disorder and disturbance as it comes into conflict with old ideals and the old view of life, the missionaries must of necessity stay their hands and decline to carry the light ? Such an argument is not worth a moment's consideration. You may argue if you like that our doctrine has not yet been understood by the people. You may argue that mass disobedience would be dangerous until the doctrine is really understood by the people. You may argue that our programme ought to be revised in the light of the disturbances which have taken place in Bombay. But the fact that disturbances have taken place is no argument against the essential truth of our movement. We must meet the situation with courage and devise means to prevent the recurrence of those disturbances; but I cannot and I will not advise you to stay yonr hand from the Non-co-operation movement. The fact that India has remained calm in spite of the recent arrests shows that the Bombay lesson has gone home. The recent manifestation of courage, endurance and remarkable self-control has in my opinion demonstrated the efficacy and the necessity of Non-violent Non-co-operation. And nothing can stop our onward march if the same spirit is still further developed and retained to the end

Impression on Bureaucracy

Ladies and Gentlemen, the success of our movement has made a deep impression on the Bureaucracy, if we may judge by the repressive policy which it has initiated and is carrying into effect. I observe that His Excellency the Viceroy objects to the policy being described as "repressive", but I have yet to know that the Seditious Meetings Act and the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act are part of the ordinary criminal law of the land. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, these were two of the Acts that were considered

by the Committee appointed to examine repressive legislation. It is true that the Committee consisting of an Indian Chairman and six Indian Members out of eight were unable to recommend the repeal of these two Acts. They have only shown what confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. But the fact remains that the Acts were treated as repressive laws and discussed as such. Lord Reading is obviously in error in suggesting, as he has done, that the arrests now being made in Calcutta and in other parts of India are under the ordinary criminal law of the land. His Excellency asserts that there are organized attempts to challenge the law, and he does not understand what purpose is served by flagrant breach of the law for the purpose of challenging the Government and in order to compel arrest. I would, with all respect, put one question to His Excellency. If Japan planted her national flag on Australia, and gave Australia such freedom and such constitution as we enjoy under Great Britain, neither more nor less, what would His Excellency's advice be to the Australians, if they were determined to win freedom at all costs ? And if Japan promulgated repressive laws without the sanction of the Australians, prohibiting meetings and declaring as unlawful all voluntary associations through which alone the Australians could hope to work for national regeneration, what would His Excellency's advice be to the Australians, supposing they solemnly agreed to defy such laws and disregard the orders issued under such laws ? I venture to think that His Excellency does not understand the situation which has arisen in India, therefore, he is puzzled and perplexed. Rightly or wrongly, the Congress has adopted the policy of Non-cooperation as the only legitimate political weapon available for its use. That is not breaking the law. Rightly or wrongly, the Congress has decided to boycott the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. That is not breaking the law. Now, in what way is the Congress to carry on its work except through the voluntary organisations which you have proclaimed unlawful under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act ? In striking at these voluntary organisations, you strike at the Congress propaganda which, you are bound to admit, is not unlawful. Why should it puzzle your Excellency, assuming you credit us with the same amount of patriotism which you have, that we have solemnly resolved to disobey your orders and court imprisonment ? I assert that it is you who have broken the law

and not we. You have transgressed the law which secures to every subject freedom of speech and action, so long as the speech and the action do not offend against the ordinary criminal law of the land. You have transgressed the law which secures to the subject the unrestricted right to hold meetings, so long as these meetings do not degenerate into unlawful assemblies. These are the common law rights of the subject which you have transgressed, and I would remind your Excellency that it is on the due observance of these elementary rights that the allegiance of the subject depends.

But then, it is said that these associations interfere with the administration of the law and order. If they do, then the ordinary criminal law is there, and it ought to be sufficient. I have heard of no instance of violence in Calcutta; certainly none was reported to the police. Charges of violence can be investigated, and therefore, they were not made. But charges of threat and intimidation are easy to make, because they cannot be investigated. I would ask the authorities one question : "Was any case of threat or intimidation reported to the police ? Has the local Government found, on enquiry, that quite apart from general allegations, which can easily be made, there were specific cases of threat or intimidation practised by the Non-cooperators on the 'loyalists' of Calcutta ?" An English Journalisl, signing himself as "Nominis Umbra," gave us his opinion to an English paper in Calcutta that the *hartal* was willingly acquiesced in by the people. We read in "A Ditcher's Diary" in "Capital" of 24th November last : "The people surrendered at discretion, but it was impossible for a careful observer not to see that not only were they, for the most part, willing victims of new *zoolum*, but also that they exulted in the discomfiture of the Sirkar." If that be so, then what case is there for the declaration under Section 16 of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act ? Was the position in Calcutta on the 17th November last worse than the position in England when a big strike is in progress ? And is it suggested that there resides any power in the Cabinet of England to put down a strike and prevent picketting ? No gentlemen, the real object of the application of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act is not to protect society against the threats and intimidation of the Non-cooperators, but to crush the Congress and the Non-cooperation movement. It is to such threat that you have to return an answer.

The Object of the Government

There is another object which the Government has in view: it is to make by threat, intimidation and coercion, the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince af Wales to Calcutta a success. On your behalf I would respectfully lay before His Royal Highness our wishes of good-will to him personally. There is no quarrel between us and the Royal House of England; but he comes here as the ambassador of a power with which we have decided not to co-operate; as such we can not receive him. Also, we are in no mood to take part in any rejoicing. We are fighting for our national existence, for the recognition of our elementary rights freely to live our own life and evolve our own destiny according to our lights. It would be sheer hypocrisy on our part to extend a national welcome to the ambassador of the Power that would deny us our elementary rights. There is, in the refusal to extend a national welcome to His Royal Highness, no disrespect either to him or to the Royal Honse of England. There is only a determination not to co-operate with the Bureaucracy.

10

NON-CO-OPERATION*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

I rise to move the Resolution on Non-Co-operation. I shall presently read the Resolution before you. But before I do that I ask you to consider it very carefully, word by word and line by line, because I most emphatically deny the charge that the Non-Co-operation Resolution which was passed in the Subject Committee is weaker and not stronger than the Resolution which was passed in Calcutta. Let me first read the Resolution. It says :

"Whereas in the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country; and whereas the people of India are now determined to establish *Swaraj*; and whereas all methods adopted by the people of India prior to the last Special Session of the Indian National Congress have failed to secure due recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially in reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab; Now this Congress, while re-affirming the resolution on Non-Violent Non-Co-operation passed at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta, declares that the entire or any part or parts of the scheme of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation, with the renunciation of voluntary association

*Speech delivered at the Session of the Congress held at Nagpur in December, 1920.

with the present Government at one end and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress or the All-India Congress Committee, and that, in the mean while, to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf."

Let me put before you in a few words the scheme of it. We say "our wrongs—including the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs." I do not enumerate the wrongs because they are so many, but each wrongs so far as I am concerned, is a cause of the attitude that I have taken up. We declare that our wrongs are of such a nature that we must attain Swaraj immediately. Then we declare that all other methods which we have employed up to now have failed and that the only method which is left to us is the method of Non Violent Non-co-operation, and we declare so that there must not be any mistake about it that this Congress has resolved definitely, clearly and without any ambiguity that the whole of this scheme of Non-co-operation shall be put in force to secure our aim to attain Swaraj. And we declare further that in the mean time, those things which we resolved upon at Calcutta are to continue; but not only those things—we are to direct our activities in other directions as well.

Here I pause for a moment to consider the question which, I regret, has been raised, namely, tkat this Resolution is weaker than the Calcutta Resolution. May I ask you to consider in what respect it is weaker ? I claim it is stronger, it is fuller, it is more complete. In the Calcutta Resolution there was no clear declaration that the National Congress has resolved to put in force the entire scheme of Non-co-operation down to the non-payment of taxes, although I believe with Mahatma Gandhi that that may not be necessary. But still if that is necessary, I want it to be clearly stated that the people of India will not shrink from putting that into force. Then, we say that in the mean time till that call is sounded—and you must remember, gentlemen, directly the call is sounded, that call has to be obeyed by all sections of the community—lawyers, students, tradesmen, merchants, agriculturists, every body and every section in the country must respond to that call. And do you understand what that means ? That means that

this tyrannical machinery of the Government is regulated—is driven, not regulated—by whom ? Not by the Bureaucracy, but by the Indians. And it means that the moment that call is sounded, every Indian is to take his hands off that machinery and compel this Government to do what you like. But ours are not the hands which will move that machinery. That is putting into force the entire scheme.

Then let us consider what we have got to do in the mean time. The Calcutta Resolution was confined to the students and lawyers and a general resolution about the boycott of foreign goods. Here we say we keep the same injunction with regard to students, but we differentiate between students under sixteen and students above sixteen. Then with regards to the lawyers, we keep the same. And not only is it that we re-affirm the Calcutta Resolution, but we say that we are not satisfied with the way in which the Resolution has been responded to by the lawyers; and we say that greater effort must be made to secure them, and also we refer to the scheme of settlement of dispute by private arbitration. Then comes the economic question. We say that the economic drainage is one of the greatest wrongs from which we have suffered and we say that a Committee of experts must be appointed at once to form and organise a plan of boycott of foreign goods. Then we come to the boycott of Councils. We say that it has succeeded, and we say further what naturally follows from that, namely, that the men who are at present occupying those seats are not representatives of the people of India. Not only do we not stop there, but we go further and say that those people who pretend to represent us do not represent us, and therefore, we call upon the voters not to take political assistance from those people. Then we appeal generally for unity in favour of the depressed classes, in favour of every section of the community which requires protection and development more than we do. This is the scheme of the Resolution.

In what respect is it weaker ? Is it weaker in respect of lawyers ? I say, No, because it re-affirms, not only does it re-affirm, but it continues to call upon lawyers to act up to that Resolution. Is it weaker from the point of view of students ? I say, No. We have guarded against students coming out under a false sentiment. I think that it is only right that the greatest National Assembly in India should declare that those students

who feel the call of duty or conscience should immediately come out regardless of consequences. It is weaker in respect of boys under sixteen years ? I ask what is weakness and what is strength. We make it stronger by making it more just and more practical. Is it weaker in respect of the economic question ? I do not admit that, because in this Resolution we have got a systematic plan of economic boycott—a practical boycott, a boycott which will not only be spoken of but acted upon by every Indian worth the name. I ask again where does the weakness of this Resolution lie. It is nothing but the result of undue suspicion. I am making no appeal. I am making no personal appeal in my favour. But I do ask you to remember that when I say anything. I mean it, and in my life, on public questions, I have never said anything which I do not believe in. Some of you may suspect but all I can say is : Brother, ask me any question and I will answer; ask me what I intend to do and I will answer. Beyond that I will not refer to personal questions.

I call upon you, in the name of all that is holy, to carry this Resolution without one single dissentient voice. I want you to declare to the nation to realise their God-given rights. Rights exist, but they have got to be realised. Rights exist because this is the eternal law of life, but still every man and every woman and every nation on earth has got to realise those rights. Realise the fact that we have got those rights, and the moment you realise that, the Bureaucracy or any "Cracy" in the world cannot stand against you; and I want to tell the Bureaucracy that we have made up our minds to compel it to recognise that which we have got. May God grant us the strength not only to pass this Resolution, but to work upon it and to carry out the great idea of which the Resolution is the expression.

11

REMEDY FOR INTERNMENT*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

I desire to say just one or two words on the policy of internment. I have always been trying to ascertain from Government officials, those who are in power, as to why these people have been interned. I am sorry to be applied in the Middle Ages, has got answer. If they say that administrative necessity requires internments, I wast to know the precise character of that necessity. We cannot be told, without any reasons being assigned, that the procedure which used to be applied in the Middle Ages, has got to be applied to India at the present day. We have a right to know why these people have been interned. I speak on behalf of all—on behalf of Mahomed Ali—I speak on behalf of other Mahomedans who have been interned—I speak for the Hindus also. We want to know why they have been interned. If the Government say that they do not want to tell the public the reason why they have been interned let us form a small committee and let the Government tell that committee why these people have been interned. I know of some people who have been put on trial and acquitted and as they were going out of the Court room they were arrested. I have got personal knowledge of several such cases. Do the Government want to tell us that although they were acquitted by the courts of justice presided over by English judges, yet they were guilty ?

*Speech delivered at the Session of the All-India Moslem League, held in Calcutta in December 1917, on the resolution protesting against the internment of Mr. Mahomed Ali, the President-elect of that year.

Are we to be told that the Penal Code did not define what the crime was? Or is it because we want Home Rule or Self-Government in this country? Is it because our desires are to be crushed, our activities paralysed that these people have been interned? If that is the real reason, let Govrenment say so, and we will know what to do under the circumstances. I need hardly tell you that it is a policy which is unjust, which is opposed to all fundamental principles of liberty. Let us consider how we could put an end to it. I have thought of a simple remedy and it is this: We should call indignation meetings all over India, not one, not ten, not hundred, not even thousands but let hundreds of thousands of meetings be held, every week, every month, in every village all over India. In every case of internment, be the internce a Hindu or a Mahomedan, let there be innumerable meetings of indignation and let the whole country ring with indignation. If we go on pursuing this policy, we will find that internments will be abolished. Let the whole country be considered as a person and let them with folded hands tell the Government, in case of every internment: "If you intern that man, you have got to intern the whole of India."

12

ROWLATT COMMITTEE REPORT*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

It is now quarter past twelve, and it is impossible to deal with the resolution, which has been put into my hands, in a satisfactory way. I shall read the resolution to you and content myself with making just two observations. The resolution runs in these terms :

> "This Congress condemns the recommendation of the Rowlatt Committee which, if given effect to, will interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of public opinion."

I find it somewhat difficult to understand why, at a time when the whole country was agitated over the question of Self-Government and over the rights of self-determination, while the whole country from one end to another was engaged in political struggle to realise their rights, at such a time the Government should have thought it fit to engage itself in forging new weapons for the oppression of the people. you have heard that according to the Government there is a Revolutionary Party in this country. I for one do not deny that there is such a party, and the new weapons which are being forged under cover of the recommendation of this Committee are for the purpose of crushing that Revolutionary Party. But you find that nowhere in the history of the world at any time any repressive measures have put a stop

*Speech delivered at the Special Session of the Congress held in Bombay in August-September 1918.

to revolutionary movements. Our complaint is that the Government of this country has not given proper attention to the question. The Government of this country has not investigated the causes of the existence of this Revolutionary Party. It is an evil, I admit; it has got to be eradicated, but this is not the way to do it. Give them rights. Self-Government is the only remedy. And to show to you that the Government never intended to investigate into the causes of this revolutionary movement, I cannot do better than read to you the Government Resolution which appointed this Committee. That resolution says : "The Governor-General in Council has with the approval of the Secretary of State decided to appoint a Committee." To do what ? "To investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement, to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies, and to advise as to what legislation, if any, is necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with them."

The Government is not anxious to enquire into the causes, but the Committee which was appointed has gone out of their way to enquire into the causes. They conducted the investigation at a period when the whole country was angry with the Government for is repressive measures. They take this enquiry from that point of time and have come to the conclusion—a shameless conclusion—that this revolutionary movement is due to the political activities of a certain section of our politicians. The honoured name of Lokamanya Tilak and of Bipin Chandra Pal are mentioned in this Report, and they also refer to the writings in the newspapers which they say inflamed the minds of this Revolutionary Party. Pray, why don's you go a step beyond that ? Whey don't you go and enquire as to why those speakers spoke in the way you deprecate and condemn ? Have you not been oppressing the people of this country for the last hundred and fifty years ? Did you ever think of any reform ? Is is not a fact that every time the question of reform was brought up, the Bureaucracy in this country stoutly opposed it ? Did you ever pay any attention to the rights of the people ? Have you not, under the cover of the Defence of India Act which was passed as a War measure, sent hundreds of people to the prison without trial ? How this Committee has recommended more drastic

measures still. I feel this so much, because I have been associated with the agitation against this internment policy. In Bengal, it is a living cry. You do not probably feel it so much in other provinces, but everything which happens in one province is a matter of very great importance to the other provinces. I welcome this Resolution because it ratifies the creed of the National Assembly and ratifies the validity of all our agitation against the internment policy of the Government.

13

FRANCHISE COMMITTEE*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

I have to place before you a resolution which is more or less of a formal character. You know that under the reform proposals, one proposal is that committees will be appointed for the purpose of determing the question of franchise and other matters, connected with franchise and other necessary particulars. Now this resolution deals with that matter. I will read the resolution to you. It says :

> "That, so far as the question of determining the franchise and the constituencies and the composition of the Legislative Assemblies is concerned, this Congress is of opinion that, instead of being left to be dealt with by committees, it should be decided by the House of Commons and be incorporated in the statute to be framed for the constitution of the Indian Government;
>
> "or
>
> "In the alternative, if a committee is appointed for the purpose, the two non-official members of the committee should be elected—one by the All-India Congress Committee and the other by the Council of the Moslem League, while the co-opted non-official member for each province should be elected by the Provincial Congress Committee of that province."

*Speech delivered at the Special Session of the Congress held in Bombay in August-September, 1918.

The first part of the resolution, therefore, declares that we do not want any committees. We know what Commissions and Committees are. We have heard of the Rowlatt Commission, we have heard of other commissions; and we know into whose hands these commissions are entrusted. Therefore, we say that we do not want the committees, let the House of Commons decide these questions. If it is said : "Where are they to get the materials from which to decide the question," my answer is : "Refer to the Blue Books." They will give you information regarding the extent of education, the population and all other details which are necessary. If a Committee is appointed, what will they do ? They will take evidence and unfortunately for us, people are not wanting in this country who, when called upon to give evidence, may give away our rights as they have done often and often before Having regard to all these circumstances, the first thing we say is that we do not want any committees; and let the House of Commons decide the question. We will go to England and instruct the members of the House of Commons rather than entrust this works to people who probably may be against the extension of franchise.

Secondly, supposing the Government do not listen to us, and a Committee is formed, the resolution goes on to say : "In the alternative if a Committee is appointed for the purpose, the two non-official members of the Committee should be elected one by the All-India Congress Committee and the other by the Council of the Moslem League while the co-opted non-official member for each province should be elected by the Provincial Congress Committee of that Province." We claim that the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League are the representive bodies of India. We want to prove that claim by our practical action and this resolution shows that we not only put that forward as an argument, but that we believe in the validity of that claim. I say that if the question of the principle of election is introduced into the formation of these Committees, there is no body in India which is better fitted and better qualified to elect the Indian members than the Indian National Congress on the one hand and the Muslim League on the other, With these observations, I commend this resolution to your acceptance.

The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, So far as the alternative in the Resolution

is concerned, I am with Mr. Das..
.. ...I therefore oppose the first part of the Resolution, and if Mr. Das will drop it, I will support the second part. I wish you to consider that in any committee that may be appointed, there should be our representatives elected by the Congress and the Muslim League.

Mr. C.R. Das—If this is going to be put to the vote, I claim the right of reply.

The President—Of course you can have the right of reply.

Mr. C.R. Das--I warm you against the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's opposition, because if you do not put it in the alternative, you will get a Committee, but will not get the Committee that you want. It is best to leave it in the hands of the House of Commons. The House of Commons should be made to understand the real condition of affairs; and we will make them understand our position and we will devise means for it. But if it is left in the hands of a Committee to be nominated by the Government, you will not get what you want, and the right sort of men will not get into it. The local knowledge and other things which will be placed before them will be fictious and therefore unreal knowledge. In these circumstances, I warn you against the Panditji's opposition.

14

SELF-GOVERNMENT*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

I have the honour to support the resolution which has been placed before you. Brother delegates, at the very outset I desire to refer to the song to which you have just listened, it is a song of the glory and victory of India. We stand here today on this platform for the glory and victory of India and I urge you that amidst the many discussions which have taken place on the form of the resolution, you should not forget the essential idea which runs through it and which stands behind it. It is a resolution which has for its object the growth and the development of the great Indian Nation. We are all agreed about that. The question is how to bring that about. Gentlemen, the Bengal ideal has been presented to you today by my friend, Babu Bipin Chandra Pal. I accept that ideal and if I thought that there was anything in this resolution which was inconsistent with that ideal, I should not have supported it. I do not think there is anything in this resolution which goes against the ideal which Bengal has unanimously declared by its resolution at the Bengal Provincial Conference. What is that ideal ? That ideal is firstly, Provincial Autonomy, viz., that the Government of India must have its sphere demarcated, its functions defined; all other functions should belong to the Provincial Governments of the particular province. Gentlemen, is that an ideal which is foreign to that resolution ? I ask you to look into it carefully. I find within it a careful

*Speech delievered on the Self-Government Resolution at the Session of the Congress held in Calcutta in December 1917.

demarcation of the sphere of the Government of India and those of the Provincial Governments. Therefore, so far as that ideal is concerned, I do not think that this is at all inconsistent with the resolution which I have the honour to support. Now gentlemen, what is the next point in the ideal of Bengal ? And that is that the functions of the Executive Government must be made subordinate to the Legislative Council which would represent the wishes of the people of the particular province. Now is there anything in this resolution which goes against that ? It may be that Bengal has provided for that in one particular way and in this resolution you have provided for that in another way, but so far as the ideal is concerned, I say that there is absolutely difference between that of Bengal and that which is shadowed in this resolution. You say in this resolution that the power of the purse should be in the hands of the Legislature. Now, gentlemen, just power of the purse should be in the hands means. Let us take it that your scheme is accepted by the Government. What does that mean ? That means that the Executive must be obedient to the Legislature. If they do nor obey the commands of the Legislature will say we stop the supplies. It may be said that the British Parliament will never grant you that but are we considering that at present ? When they make a definite pronouncement as to what they are willing to give us, it wlll be time then to meet again and formulate a definite scheme as to the way in which that ideal may be given effect to. But the time has not come to discuss about it, because I am afraid in the discussion of it, the main ideal may get lost and I am most anxious to keep up that ideal before you. But whatever happens to the drafting of this resolution—the matter of drafting may be corrected—I hope, gentlemen, that whatever happens, you will stick in this that the time has come when the British Parliament must take up its mind to transfer the powers from the hands of the Bureaucracy to the people of this country. We have had enough of the Bureaucracy in this country. We have suffered and groaned under the misrule of 150 years, and not one day is to be lost in declaring our will and to see that our wishes are given effect to—that the powers which are in the hands of the Bureaucracy today are transferred to the people of the country. Now, gentlemen, having regard to that ideal, I must say that I do not see any inconsistency between what we want in Bengal and that which is put forward in the

resolution But my revered friend Mr. Tilak said that this scheme is very much better than the Bengal scheme or any other scheme. I am speaking of Provincial Governments—of the scheme which relates to the ideal of the Provincial Governments and I do not see any difference there. Mr. Tilak thinks it is not wise to ask too much. I ask him to read the resolution again and he will find in it that it does not claim one item less than the Bengal scheme—not one item less. It claims the whole thing—it claims perfect responsible government for India. I do not understand the power over the purse to mean anything less than that. Without saying perfect responsible government for the provinces as well as for the central Government, you may convey the same idea by saying: "I do not care what you do, but give me the power over the purse. But if you give me the power over the purse, I can have my own way. You, the Executive, you say you will not obey my command, but I will stop your supplies. Where are you then? You will have to obey my command." And if they obey your command, what is the good of saying that we have not asked for Responsible Government? You have done so in an indirect manner but as effectively as we have done in Bengal. You have asked not only for full responsible government for the provinces but also for the central government. Now it may be that this ought to be put in another shape, the words may have to be changed, for this scheme does not pretend to be a perfect or an exact one.

I agree with my friend Mr. Jinnah who said: Let the Government come out with a definite pronouncement—the government declaration is vague—let the government come out with its declaration—a definite pronouncement as to what they are willing to give. It will be time then to sit over this resolution again, to consider what words are to be used and what words to reject or what new words are to be put in. I think we have been fighting unnecessarily. We are all agreed as to the great ideal. Let us gather strength to fight for it—let us fight for it with all our might and let us not rest content all the whole thing is granted to us viz., Responsible Government in the Provinces, Responsible Government in Imperial matters—till the whole of the Government is put into hands of the people. I rely on no dictum of politicians—I rely upon my natural right. I do not care what the constitution of England or the constitution of Switzerland or that

of Australia is I want to build my own constitution. I want the power to build my own constitution in a way which is suited to this country and which afterwards will be referred to as the great Indian Constitution. That is what we want and that is what we must have. Do not engage in endless discussion in the meantime. Gather all your strength and say with one voice all over India, in every village, in every town, in provincial gatherings and in this Congress that nothing less than the transference of the Governmental powers into the hands of the people will satisfy us. It is our natural right, it is the birthright of every individual to live and to grow. It is the natural right of every nation to live and to grow according to its nature. We demand that right—that right has been unjustly withheld from us—by excuses and pretences—by subterfuges—we have discovered that. We were sleeping, but by God's grace, we are awake and we claim our natural right.

15

BENGAL AND THE BENGALEES*

CHITTARANJAN DAS

Today in this Great Assembly of Bengalees I have come to speak of Bengal. You have commanded me to do so, and I hasten to answer your command. In this Hall of Union I shall not waste your time by spinning words at long length about my fitness or unfitness. But I have loved this land of mine with all my heart from childhood; in manhood, through all my manifold weakness, unfitness and poverty of soul, I have striven to keep alive its sacred image in my heart, and today, on the threshold of age, that image has become truer and clearer than ever. And though I can boast of no claim to leadership, as based on title, the claim that springs from deep and passionate love, that claim is mine. Love, like a lighted lamp, will lead me on my way; and your combined fitness transmitted to me will make up for my deficiencies.

Such is the hope with which I stand before you today in order to speak of Bengal. I shall lay before you some of those things which have been simmering in my mind for a long time—things which I have realized more and more fully, through all the endeavours and experiences of life—things which I have definitely and decisively accepted as *true*. It may be that my words will not be acceptable to our rulers; it may be also that

*Presidential Address delivered at the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Calcutta in April 1917.

there are many among you who will not agree with my views. But there can be no shame or fear in speaking the truth. And the saying that cautions us against uttering unpleasant truths does not require that we must suppress things which we know to be true and which we feel it our duty to speak about. Perhaps I have nothing of that pettifogging intellect which thinks it the height of wisdom to conceal facts that are patent before the eye, nor can I say that I regret the absence of this quality. And hence I shall lay before you, without hesitation and shrinking, what I feel to be true—whether it is welcome or out.

Some people might say : "This Conference is for political discussion; what has talk about Bengal to do with it ?" Such a question would be symptomatic of our disease. To look lise not as a comprehensive whole, but as divided among many compartments, was no part of our national culture and civilisation. We have borrowed this method from Europe, and we have not understood what we have borrowed; and hence the failure of so much of our effort and endeavour. The thing that we are accustomed to describe as Politics—has it no organic or intimate connection with the whole of Bengal or the whole of the Bengalee people ? Will anyone tell me that this portion of our national life is the subject of Politics, that another portion is the subject of Economics, while a third portion is the subject of Sociology ? Must we divide life bit by bit like this ? Must we raise insuperable barriers between these imaginary compartments of ours ? And must our political work be confined to an imaginary compartment which we have thus enclosed with imaginary walls ? Rather, must we not view our political discussions from the standpoint of the whole of our countrymen ? And how shall we find truth unless we view life thus comprehensively and as a whole ?

The thing will be clear if we look into it a little more deeply. What is Politics ? What is the object of this science ? There is no distinctive name for it in our culture; our ancestors did not feel it necessary to give a separate name to it. But it may be said that the object of what is called 'Politics' in Europe is to ascertain the precise relation that must subsist between Sovereign and subject and to discover and unfold the universal principle that underlies this relation. Considered from this point of view, the object of political discussion in Bengal would be to examine the relation that actually subsists between the rulers and the ruled

and to decide as to what such relation ought to be. In other words, the object of Political Science is to accertain as to how much of political power should rest with the rulers and how much with the ruled, in order that the affairs of the country may be conducted in peace and harmony.

But, after all, what is the ultimate object and significance of this political thought and endeavour ? If we seek to express it in one word, we shall have to say—what has been said so often—that the object of our politics will be to build up the Bengalees into a nation of men. I would not admit for one moment that the Bengalees are wanting in manhood—nay, rather I feel an inexpressible pride in describing myself as a Bengalee. I know that the Bengalee has a culture and philosophy of his own, that he has a Law, History, Philosophy and Literature of his own. And so I can declare with confidence that he knows not my Bengal who describes the Bengalee as wanting in manhood.

But we may take it for granted that the Bengalee have many faults which require to be corrected; and in that sense we may concede for argument that the Bengalee is decficient in manhood. To correct this deficiency, to complete the manhood of Bengal must be the aim and endeavour of our political efforts; and it is, therefore, that we must discuss the precise relation between Sovereign and subject in this country. But in order to do this adequately, we shall have to ascertain precisely what our present condition is; and in order to ascertain this, we shall have to take first into consideration the material circumstances of our people. This again will require that we shall have to enquire into the condition of our peasantry—whether agricultural wealth is increasing or decreasing, and whether agriculture is flourishing or otherwise. This in its turn will lead us to a further enquiry still, viz., as to why our people are leaving their villages in increasing numbers and are coming to settle within towns. Is it because the villages are insanitary, or is there any other reason for that ? Thus we find that an adequate discussion of Politics will involve a consideration of agricultural question as well as the question of village sanitation.

At the same time we shall have to consider whether we can improve our material condition even by bringing under tillage all the available cultivable land of the country. If we cannot. then we shall to consider the question of industry and trade

as well.

To understand these questions aright, we shall have to consider what our agricultural and commercial methods were in the past and how we used to maintain the health of our villages.

And not this merely. We shall have to consider also the question and culture. How we trained ourselves in the past, how we used to diffuse education in the past and what the methods of presentday education must be - these should be discussed along with political questions.

We shall have to consider further how our agriculiure, our trade, our education were all connected in the past with our social systems and in the light of this knowledge, we must consider what their present relation to society must be. Unless this relation is precisely ascertained, how can we answer as to how much of political power should be with the Sovereign and how much with the subject ?

And not even this alone. We must consider also the precise relation in which all our thoughts, endeavours and activities stood and still stand with reference to the question of Religion; for I believe that we shall misread and mis-know all things, unless we keep this point steadily in view. If we disregard this aspect of things, all our problems will become unnecessarily hard and complex, and no solution will ever be possible for them.

We have many dangers and difficulties in the path; but our chiefest danger is this that we have become largely and unnecessarily Anglicised in our education, culture and social practices. The mere mention of 'Politics' conjures up before our eyes the vision of English political institutions; and we feel tempted to fall down before and worship the precise form which Politics has assumed under the peculiar conditions of English History. We would gladly transplant the English article altogether to our native soil, and we never consider whether it will find that soil congenial for its growth or not. We repeat *ad nauseum* the political maxims of Burke; we imbibe the words of Gladstone and think perchance that they represent the acme of political wisdom; or we make choice quotations from Seely's "Expansion of England" and Sidgwick's treatises on Politics. There is no end to our talk about schools and systems of politics; we learn by rote all the polished phrases that we can pick up from the texts and

scriptures of European Politics; and fancying ourselves invincible in our panoply of learned phrases, we challenge the Government to enter into a war of words with us. We fancy that we shall triumph by talk and discussion; and so we burden all our endeavour with a load of unnecessary words and formulas. Only we neglect the one thing essential. We never look to our country, never think of Bengal or the Bengalees, of our past national history, or our present material condition. Hence our political agitation is unreal and unsubstantial—divorced from all intimate touch with the soul of our people.

Perhaps you will not admit the truth of what I say; but the thing will not be the less true on that account. We may shut our eyes to facts; but facts have a knack of finding us out all the same. We boast of being educated; but how many are we? What room do we occupy in the country? What is our relation to the vast masses of our countrymen? Do they think our thoughts or speak our speech? I am bound to confess that our countrymen have little faith in us. And what is the reason of this unfaith? Down in the depths of our soul, we, the enducated people, have become Anglicised; we read in English, think in English and even our speech is translated from English. Our borrowed Anglicism repels our unsophisticated countrymen: they prefer the genuine article to the shoddy imitation. Besides, we seem to look upon them with contempt. Do we invite them to our assemblies and our conferences? Perhaps we do, when we want their signatures to some petition to be submitted before the Government; but do we associate with them heartily in any of our endeavours? Do we co-operate with them in deed and truth? Is the peasant a member in any of our Committee or Conferences? Do we consult his voice in arriving at any of our decisions? Let us then in all aumilty confess the truth and admit our gross and serious shortcomings in this matter. No truth, no right, can be based upon a falsehood; and hence I have said that our political agitation is a lifeless and soulless farce—a thing without reality and truth. No doubt we shall have to build it up into truth; but to do that we shall have to base it upon the life of Bengal; and hence it is that I propose in this great assembly to speak about my land, my home, the *Banga-Bhumi* of ours.

But there is no cause for despair in the danger of which I

have spoken. Our present condition may be abnormal; but it has been brought about by the operation of inevitable world-forces. Let us think for a moment of the fatal and universal weakness which had beset our people when the English first came to this land. Our Religion of Power—the Gospel of "Sakti"—had become a mockery of its former self; it had lost its soul of beneficence in the repetition of empty formulas and the observance of meaningless mummeries. Again, the Religion of Love with which Mahaprabhu had conquered the country—a religion which, like some mighty current of glory and light, had swept with resistless force over the land and had borne strength and life whithersoever it went—that religion too had become reduced to a barren clashing of beads. As with Religion, so it had happened with Knowledge; and the traditions of Navadwip's ancient glory and scholarship had become a mere name and memory. Thus, the Hindus of Bengal had lost strength and vigour alike in Religion, Science, and Life. And the Musalmans also had similarly declined since the days of Alivardi; their strength and manhood had been swept away in that passion for luxury which is a sure mark of weakness and decadence.

It was in this period of gloom and depression that the English tradesman came to India. He raised his empire in a world of ruins, and by rapid extension of power gave proof of his wonderful energy and vitality. To us it happened as it happens to all the weak. We accepted the English Government, and with that we accepted the English race—their Culture, their Civilisation, their Luxury and their Licence. And even as some benighted traveller, missing the easy and well-beaten track, may follow some far and circuitous route, so we, in the blindness of our misfortune, drifted away from the ancient landmarks of our soil—its History, its Culture, its Law and its Philosophy, and went in passionate persuit of the Literature, Science and Philosophy of the English people. Perhaps this infatuation for things foreign has lessened in force; but we cannot claim that it has disappeared altogether.

The trumpet of Science which Ram Mohan sounded at the threshold of national life—we heard it or we thought that we heard it; in any case, we began repeating its cant formulas. But we cared little for that profound study of the Shastras in which Ram Mohan had immersed himself; we overlooked altogether the fact that Ram Mohan had sought to find the path of our salvation

in the middest of our national culture and civilisation. Time passed; schools and colleges came to be founded, and our bent towards Western civilisation became more marked still. Then, after long years, Bankim came and set up the image of our Mother in the motherland. He set up the image, and inspired it with life; and it was he who beheld and recognised the Mother first. He called unto the whole people and said : "Behold, this is our Mother; worship her and establish her in your houses." The song which he sang was of this Mother, "well-watered, well-fruited, cool with the south breeze, green with the growing corn." But we were deaf to the song that he sang, we were blind to the image that he saw : "I am crying alone in the wilderness."

Then came Sashadhar Tarkachuramani and the revival of Hinduism—a revival about the value of which there is considerable difference of opinion. There are some who say that it has been fruitful of much good, and there are others who think that it was wholly evil. I consider it unnecessary to discuss this matter in detail. I believe that this agitation in many of its phases was altogether without substance; but even in this abortive endeavour I perceive a blind striving on the part of our people to regain some consciousness of their lost self—and this much was altogether again.

More time passed. The trumpet of *Swadeshism* began to sound in 1903. The people of Bengal began once more to understand and realise themselves. *Rabindranath* sang : "The soil of Bengal, the water of Bengal—make it true, O Lord." And as if in response to the poet's sang, the soil and water of Bengal began to justify themselves.

There are many wise, grave and reverent seigniors among us who think—so I have heard—that the Swadeshi Agitation was a colossal blunder. Western education has given rise to a kind of souless culture in our midst—a culture that is powerless for good but is ambitious of much. People who boast of this culture seek to measures all things by rule and scale; they are "Pundits" of Mathematics, and they reduce all questions to the level of mathematical problems. But the flood of life defies Mathematics, it sweeps away scale and balance. The Swadeshi Movement came like a tempest; it rushed along impetuously like some mighty flood. When the soul awakes, it awakes, without calculation; when man is born, he is born without calculation. Man comes into life

because he must; and the soul rises to consciousness because it must. And the great flood of life which we designate as the Swadeshi Movement—it submerged us, it swept us off our feet, but it revitalised our lives; it enabled us to come once more in contact with the living, vital soul of Bengal. Under its reviving influence we steeped ourselves once again in that stream of culture and civilisation which has been flowing perennially through the heart of Bengal; we were enabled once more to catch glimpses of the true continuity of our national history.

The soul of Buddhism, of Saivism, of Saktaism, and of Vaishnavism—the Swadeshi Movement helped us to understand it all; it reminded us of the song of Chandidas and Vidyapati; it enabled us to appreciate more fully the radiant glory of Chaitanya's great life. The strains of Jnan Das, Govinda Das, Lochan Das and the old "Kaviwallas" began once more to echo in our hearts; Ramprasad's devotional music enraptured us again; we understood the significance of Ram Mohan's deep discipline; we recognised the image which Bankim worshipped and about which he sang ; "Thou art culture, and thou art low; thou art heart, and thou art soul, and thou art the breath of life in the body. In the arms thou art strength; in the heart thou art devotion; and it is thy image, Mother, which we build in all over shrines." Bankim's song went through our ears and thrilled our hearts. We understood once again what it was that Ramkrishna sought and found; and we unterstood how it was that Keshab Chandra could leave the outer world of argument and enter the inner world of the heart. The speach of Vivekananda filled our souls. We understood that the Bengalee might be a Hindu or Musalman or Christian, but he continued to be a Bengalee all the same; that he has a distinct type, a distinct character and a distinct law of his own. In this world of men, the Bengalee has a place of his own—a claim, a culture and a duty. We understood that the Bengalee, if he means to realise himself, will have to be a true Bengalee. In the wonderful variety of God's infinite creation the Bengalee represents a distinctive type, and Bengal is the image and embodiment of that type; nay more, it is the life and soul of that type. And with the dawn of this consciousness in our souls, the Mother, radiant in her glory, revealed her infinite, her universal beauty before us. Our hearts were flooded with this beauty. We beheld that the Mother was one and yet many—distinctive and yet universal.

on these excerpts. It is possible that the absence of a full report has led me to do him an injustice; but as President of this Conference, I cannot allow his published opinion to pass without question and challenge.

It seems to me, then, that the whole of this anti-nation idea is unsubstantial—based upon a vague and nebulous conception of universal humanity. Each nation must develop its latent manhood *as a nation*, ere it is posible to rouse within them the sense of true amity and brotherliness. You cannot create universal humanity out of vaccum; and if you abolish the sense of nationality, what will be the basis of your universal humanity ? As the family cannot grow unless each individual within it grows at the same time; as society cannot grow unless each component family-group develops within it; and as the nation cannot grow unless each community embraced by it grows along with it : so Humanity at large cannot advance unless each different nation develops its distinctive type of character and civilization. Whatever may be the blood that flows within our veins, be it Aryan or non-Aryan —and like Satyakama of old, the Bengalee will never seek to conceal the truth—the Bengalee cannot forget that he is a Bengalee first and last, that he has grown up on the soil and atmosphere of Bengal, and that his daily intercourse is with this soil and atmosphere of his land. A true, permanent and fundamental relation underlies this physical intercourse; and the nationality of Bengal is founded upon this true, permanent and fundamental relation. Even the commercial and cultural intercourse that we may have with other countries will help to enrich and develop this distinctive type of nationality; for it is the special virtue of nationality that it can give as well as receive. As for the inevitable conflict between different nationalities, of which some people make so much, it is impossible to deny that the development of the nation-idea leads on to a certain amount of necessary clash and conflict. But, after all, must we abolish nationality because nations enter into war with one another ? Following the same train of reasoning, will it be said that we must abolish individual existence because individuals are perpetually quarrelling with one another ? Such arguement is foolish. Man will develop his humanity, will find out the path to harmony, in spite of all differences and conflicts; and the same truth holds good in the case of nations as well. It is in and through the hundred wars and conflicts of today that the nations

of the world will march on towards that temple of harmony and peace which Providence has fixed for them all.

Each thing in this world has two facets to it; and so there are two facets also to the clash and conflict that we meet with in our lives. It is the disharmony of these conflicts which arrests our attention, and the deeper harmony that lies beyond is unheard by us. Thus the War that is ravaging Europe at the present day seems altogether evil and terrible to outer view. But look deeper, and you will find that, like some noble sacrificial fire, this War will burn up all the spite, malice and pettiness of Europe—all the poverty and greed that was born of its infinite power and insolence. It is the nature of all pettiness and self-love that it destroys itself by its own excess; and true union is impossible without this devotion to the not-self. Many perhaps will think that Europe is hastening to her destruction through this cataclysmic War of today; but such is far from being my personal view. Did not India gain a fresh lease of life from the wars of Kurukshetra ? Did it not bring about some union between the Aryans and the non-Aryans ? And even so, Europe is stepping onward to a larger harmony and peace, through the pain, misery and starvation of today; and when the fire of this War is quenched, you will find that Europe has outgrown that terrible pre-occupation with self which is the besetting feature of its energies at the present moment: I cannot deny that this War is the consequence of nationalism pushed to its excess; but the larger union among the peoples of Europe which is bound to come in consequence of this War—who will deny that this too will be the fruit of the same principle of nationalism ? And if at some dim and distant day, the Federation of Humanity is established in this world, that will be because the different nations of the earth will each have reached the full development of its distinctive peculiarities; and it is my firm and deliberate belief that when things have reached that state, Kings and Kingdoms will be no more necessary for the good of the world than Nations and Nationalities.

There are certain other points which require to be discussed in connection with this claim to nationality. It is objected by some people that the idea of nationalism is wholly a foreign importation, a borrowed article merely; and as such, it is nothing for us to boast of. I shall try to point out that this criticism is based upon a radical misconception. The spirit of nationalism, as

I have said already, is founded upon that permanent and immutable relation which subsists between a particular people and the land which they inhabit. It is possible that this relation was not always clearly and adequately realized by us; it is possible also that we should have been slow to realize it but for the sudden and violent incursion of a foreign culture and civilization upon us. But the relation was there all the same—permanent, immutable and eternal; and shall I insult our people by saying that the feeling was not there when only the consciousness of the feeling was absent ? Just as the laws of gravitation existed even before the birth of Newton, so the nationality of the Bengalees existed even before the advent of the British people; only the shock of an alien civilization was needed to make us conscious of this spirit, and the shock was supplied from Europe. Very similar is the process by which consciousness of self is obtained in the individual life. The physical things of the outer world give a shock to our senses and make us perceive; but that which we perceive as the result of this shock is our own self, not something out of us. And so the newly awakened national life, of which we have become conscious, is our own, and not something out of us. The Swadeshi Movement made us perceive it in our heart of hearts; we had not to borrow it from beyond the seas.

There is another point which requires consideration along what I have said above. We say often that the advent of the British people was in accordance with a Divine dispensation; and this is what my friend Sir S.P. Sinha repeated in his Presidential Address at Bombay. We speak much also in the same connection about the union between the East and the West. These two points are at bottom one and they require to be considered together.

Kipling has said : "The West is West and the East is East, and never the twain shall meet." On the other hand, there are people, both here and in England, according to whom the union between East and West is inevitable, is bound to come. Sir Rabindranath has said in America that a universal brotherhood of mankind will replace the modern divisions among races and nationalities; and Sir S.P. Sinha spoke thus in Bombay : "The East and West have met—not in vain. The invisible scribe, who has been writing the most marvellous history that has ever been written, has not been idle. Those who have the discernment and

inner vision to see will note that there is one goal, one path."

The more I think of these opposite poles of opinion, the more I believe that they are both true and both false. Let us consider what the import of this union between the East and the West may be; and for the purpose of argument let us take England as typical of the West and Bengal as typical of the East. If, by the union of Bengal and England, it is meant that Bengal will be a sort of mimic England and that we the Bengalees will be mimic Englishmen and English-women—if it is meant that our education, agriculture and trade will be Anglicised and that this country, instead of being a peaceful, domestic hermitage, will develop into some huge and gigantic factory—then I say that such union is absolutely impossible. There are some who will object : Why should it be impossible ? There are many even in this town who mould their lives entirely upon English lines and who live, dress and dine like Europeans. Also, the trade and industry of Calcutta are cast entirely upon English models; and the fashion of Calcutta easily and naturally becomes diffused over the rest of the province. How then can it be said that we shall not grow up altogether after a European pattern ?" My answer would be that it is easy to imitate a foreign thing but difficult to grow up into the genius of that foreign thing. Imitation is a mere matter of whom; it can be put on and put off at will; but growth is a question of organism, and you cannot grow into a different thing from what you are, unless the seed and germ of this different thing is already present in your own organism. Now, I can never bring myself to believe that the germ or organism of English civilization is implanted in the nature and constitution of Bengal; and hence I think that it is impossible that the Bengalee will ever grow into the genius and civilization of England. Considered from this point of view, it seems that Kipling is right, that the East will always be West, and permanent union between the two must be for ever unattainable.

Then, again, will it be said that union between the East and the West will mean that both will lose their individual peculiarities.

There are others again who put a curious interpretation upon this union between the East and the West. They say that we shall adopt what is best in the West and that the West will adopt

what is best in the East, and a curious amalgam—a composite nationality—will thus be the result. I do not precisely understand the bearing and significance of this kind of argument. The elements of good and evil do not exist separately, either in us or in the character of the English. Rather, these dements are inextricably interwined and rooted deep in the fundamentals of national character so that it is impossible to leave out the bad and accept the good alone. The character of a nation is not like a structure of brick so that you can demolish a portion of it and rebuild it by materials taken from outside. It is impossible to reform one nation on the model or pattern of another. If we want to reform our national character, we must do so with the help of the forces which are latent in our own national individuality. The forces of European social life will be powerless and unavailing for that. Just as no permanent union can be effected by gluing together two separate physical things, so no permanent union can be effected by importing special features from the life of a foreign nationality and seeking to graft them upon the genius and character of our own nation. In nations, as in individuals, we meet, not with the operation of mechanical forces, but with the play of life; and life will never develop into any form the seed of which is not inherent in itself.

Let us consider this question from another point of view. Suppose we can extract what is good from the life of England, and suppose that we can graft it easily upon our own national life. What would be the result ? The inevitable consequence will be that our national life will be a sort of repetition and echo of the national life of England; and in the economy of the world, is there any room for repetitions and echoes ? I know that there are many who seek to graft the institutions of European social life in our midst, and who sincerely believe that such grafting will lead to an immensity of good. But we have nothing to fear from the endeavours of these people. I know that we the Bengalees have a distinctive national character of our own; that this distinctive national character has a law and force of its own; and I know further that this distinctive national type will always seek to assert itself and will utterly reject and cast out what is foreign to its nature and law.

But though there will be no fusion between the East and the West and no mechanical or eclectic union between them, yet I,

together with many others, believe in the possibility of a deeper union between these two entities. Now, what will be the nature of this union ? This question may be considered from two points –the point of view of nationality and the point of view of government and administration. Considered from the second standpoint, it may be said that the Bengalees and the English will both preserve the distinctive type of their national character; yet, in affairs of higher administration and government, there is bound to come about an ultimate union between the two. What the precise character of the administrative union between England and India may be, it will be impossible to forecast at present. In his Presidential Address at the Bombay National Congress, Sir S.P. Sinha said : "It seems to me that, having fixed our goal, it is hardly necessary to attempt to define in concrete terms the precise relationship that will exist between England and India when the goal is reached."

Such also is my opinion. Only I should like to add that the relation that will be ultimately established between England and India will be such that it will not destroy the national individuality of either. If we consider the question now from the standpoint of nationality, the ground of permanent union between England and India will be at once apparent. I have said already that union between two notionalities becomes possible only when each has reached its fullest point of development. Hence, there will be permanent union between England and Bengal only when each has developed the highest perfection that is open and possible unto it. True union does not lead to fusion or the complete merging of one in another; rather it leads to the complete development of the distinctive type and character which is latent in each separate factor. Distinctiveness can never be abolished; nationality can never perish, Union only brings into clear prominence the deeper harmony which underlies all outer differences between different nationalities. The universal brotherhood of man is possible only here; and only from this point of view it can be said that the East and West have met and not in vain.

To sum up what I have said before : In order to advance the true welfare of our country, we shall have to look to our newly awakened national life; we shall have to look to the continuity of our national history; we shall have to consider our

actual present condition; and then we shall have to adopt such measures for the improvement of those conditions as may be consonant with our national life and the continuity of our national history.

A REVIEW OF OUR PRESENT CONDITION

In taking a survey of our present condition, we have to think first of our Agriculturists; and that reminds us at once of our poverty. We all know that in the absence of trade and commerce. agriculture is the chief means of our subsistence; and we all know that in this world there is no nation so poor as the Bengalees; but perhaps we do not fully realise the real significance of this problem of poverty. We have not been impoverished all in a moment : we have been advancing steadily along the path of decay, and hence it is that we fail to realise the full gravity and acuteness of our material situation. When foreigners first came to Bengal, they were struck with wonder at the abundance of precious metals in the country; but whence did we derive all this gold and silver ? Seeing that we have no mines in our country, the conclusion is obvious that we derived our wealth from agriculture and commerce.

From Government publications it appears that, taking into consideration the total population of the province and the available amount of agricultural land, the proportion works out at 2 bighas of arable land per head. Now, it is impossible for a man to make his livelihood out of 2 bighas of land; and besides we have to take into account periods of drought and scarcity; and we must remember also that our malariastricken peasants cannot labour all the year round even upon their small pittance of 2 bighas of land. From Government publications it further appears that the total food-production of the province amounts to 248 million maunds. The quantity of food actually required for our consumption is not less than 320 millions of maunds. Thus, even leaving aside the question of export, we find that there is a shortage of nearly 80 million maunds of food in the country. Is not this an ample proof of the poverty of the people ?

Many of our officials talk about the hoarded wealth of the country. This hoarded wealth consists, recording to them, partly of ornaments and partly of actual cash which the people bury

beneath the soil. I cannot bring myself to believe that within the last 30 years our people have had any surplus coinage which they could afford to bury; bat even granting that a certin portion of money is buried, we may take it that the wealth thus buried under the earth has been reduced to the earth and that there is no possibility of extracting it again. As for ornaments, we must consider that the majority of our people use silver ornaments and not gold; and owing to the prevalence of gold currency in England, the value of silver is to be fixed with reference to a gold standard. Now the value of silver has appreciably decreased enormously, partly owing to natural causes and, in our country, partly owing to abnormal legislation. This also has been another cause of our poverty.

If further proofs of our poverty are wanted, these also can be found from Government publications. There is not one single village in Bengal where at least 75 per cent, of the inhabitants are not indebted; and there are villages where this frightful indebtedness extends to the whole of the population. Thus, it appears, first that the peasant by tilling his land does not earn enough to give him an adequate livelihood; and secondly, that out of the little that he earns, a portion finds its way into the hands of the "mahajan." It is impossible for men to develop true manhood unless they can live with a decent degree of comfort. I am not speaking of comfort from the European stand-point, and most certainly I am not speaking of luxury. But if you have not enough with which to keep the body in health, the mind in peace and the heart free from anxiety, it is impossible to bring out the best that may be latent in you.

We have a popular saying that poverty is the source of all corruption; and in reviewing the conditions of our peasants, we find that poverty grinds them in two ways. In the first place, it makes them weak, feeble and spiritless, and in the second place, it has become a frightful source of theft, robbery and dacoity. Thus, from whatever point of view we consider the matter, the removal of poverty seems to be one of our chief and foremost problems.

Closely connected with this question of poverty is the question of village depopulation. The village is the centre of our civilization and culture; and hence the decay of village depopulation is two-fold. In the first our body-politic. Now, the cause

of this village depopulation is two-fold. In the first place, there is the ravage of malaria, and in the second place, there is the temptation of city life with its ease, luxury, and commercial and money-making facilities. Thus modern cities, like some huge anaconda, are swallowing up the ancient village centres of our province; and one of our chief duties will be to re-establish the health, prosperity and welfare of the villages. In order to do this, we shall have to improve the water supply of our villages, to remove jungles, to educate the common people in the laws of health and sanitation. Also in order that agriculture may flourish, we shall have to establish banking institutions upon a small scale. Such in brief are some of the measures which will have to be adopted in order that poverty and disease may be adequately grappled with. But who are to undertake these measures? Will it be the Government or ourselves? That is a question with which I shall deal afterwards.

It will be clear, from what I have said already, that mere agriculture will not be sufficient for us; without industry and commerce, our poverty will never be removed. We shall have to find out first how we stood in these respects formerly; and then we shall have to consider as to how best we can reestablish what was in the past.

We have no commerce; hence, future has left us, our happiness has forsaken us; what remains is the dream of former happiness and the langour and misery of insistent pain. But this was not always so. Time was when we earned our own bread and wove our own clothes. Yards decorated with paint by housedames; the open and boundless sky; tree-shaded hamlets; bread earned with toil of body and brow—all this was ours; but today it is all a wide and universal desolation. Why is it that this misery and desolation has visited us? The fault is ours; but is all the fault ours? His tory will never allow us to forget our own shortcoming; but this fault of the weak is multiplied a hundred-fold by conflict and collision with the strong. The history of one period of transition is wrapped in deep darkness—warm with tears and heavy with groans. It is best not to rake back into this fearful past, for the yield will be poison. Suffice it to say that in those days of old we not only fed ourselves, but gave food to half the world besides; not only clothed ourselves, but supplied garments to a continent. But this wealth of grain and

garment disappeared with the advent of the English in the 18th century. You will ask : "Who made it disappear ? What is the evidence of history ?" My answer is : "On such points, silence is best."

As I look back on the dim darkness of this distant century, the past seems peopled with vague and phantom shapes of terror; and I repeat again that the fault was ours. We had lost our manhood; and losing manhood, we had lost all claim, save the claim of life. Miserable as we were, our commerce, our manufacture, our industry—we sacrified it all on the altar of the alien tradesman. The wheel and distaff broke in our household; we cut off our own hands and feet; we strangled fortune in her own cradle. Again I repeat, the fault was with us and with none else—with our weakness, our wantonness, our frivolity, our deep irreverence.

We had corn in our granaries; our cattle gave us milk; our tanks supplied us with fish; and the eye was smoothed and refreshed by the limpid blue of the sky and the green foliage of the trees. All day long the peasant toiled in the fields; and at eve, returning to his lamp-lit home, he sang the song of his heart For six months the peasant toiled in the field; and for the six remaining months of the year he worked at such hereditary industry or craft as was most consonant with the natural genius of his being.

Today that peasant is gone—his very breed extinct; gone too is that household with its ordered and peaceful economy of life. The granaries are empty of their golden wealth; the kine are dry and give no milk; and the fields, once so green, are dry and parched with thirst. The evening lamp is not lighted; the household gods are not worshipped; even the plough-cattle have to be sold, in order to give us some poor and meagre sustenance. The tanks have dried up; their water has become brackish and unwholesome; and the peasant has lost his natural freshness and gaiety of temperament.

How has this fearful nakedness and desolation come about ? Whatever the evidence of history may be, considered deeply, the fault is our own. He who deliberately keeps himself weak, his weakness is his sin. We had made aliens of our own people; we had forgotten the ideals of our heart; and to make others responsible for our sins mill not be penance sufficient

for us.

Wherein lay our mistake? It sprang from the clash and conflict of ideals. The conflict of ideals between the East and the West—it is this which has been the cause of our present weakness and feebleness. We had not the strength to keep us alive; that weakness was our fault and that fault has not left us yet. Even now, when we are aware, when we have become conscious—even now, we are not staunch and loyal to our own ideal. The conflict of ideals still goes on in our midst and we are still content to follow the gods of others. The delusion which made us abandon our own ideal—that delusion hypnotizes us still and even now we do not realize that the ideal of England is best for England and not for us. Not indulgence but sacrifice must be the rule of our conduct when we week to build up life either in the nation or in the individual; and so, in this critical period of nation-building, we must root out and cast aside the European ideal of Indulgence and must cleave fast to our native and ancient ideal of Sacrifice. Life must be made as simple, wholesome, rational and above all strong. The individualism of Europe was never the ideal of the East; and yet this false and meretericious ideal has crept insidiously in our midst But in our heart of hearts, this one thing we must remember for ever that this industrialism never was and never will be any part of our nature. We must accept only what is consonant with the genius of our being and we must reject and utterly cast aside what is foreign to our soul. Let us consider once again what formerly we had—the permanent and perennial source of our strengh. The stately and majestic rivers of Bengal which rushed impetuously towards the sea and the strength and might of which it is impossible to resist, they will flow onwards in all their ancient majesty and might of strength. The august Himalaya, ancient of days, still stands lifting up its brow towards heaven; and the forests that clothed his sides are still are green ever. The great permanent features of earth over which the life and soul of Bengal is founded—they are still there, permanent, immutable, majestic. But though the land is there, its life has fled; the nation is there, but its soul is dead. We talk about industries; we call congresses and conferences; and we seek to build up a borrowed Indian Nation. But do we think of our ravaged and depopulated villages? Do we think of the hungry, half-starved, malaria-stricken skeletons who drag out the

lingering chain of life in the dim and forgotten recesses of these dreary haunts of disease. Our ancestors—when they had money—used to dig tanks so that unborn generations might drink of the wholesome water and live; they planted peepul-trees by the road-side so that unborn generations of wayfarers might enjoy the restful shade and bless the nameless giver. They had eyes to see, breasts to feel and the heart to sympathise with their fellow-beings. But during the last 100 years of our borrowed and imitative existence, what tanks have we dug ? What trees have we planted—What temples have we reared ? We have lost our ancient joy and happiness in existence; we have lost the old solidarity and cohesion of our domestic and village life; we have lost our art, industry and agriculture. And yet, heedless of these real losses, we run in idle pursuit of the chimera of Industrialism and talk glibly about mills, factories, cheap labour, and what not.

If we ssek to establish Industrialism in our land, we shall be laying down with our own hands the road to our destruction. Mills and factories—like some gigantic monster—will crush out the title of life that still feebly pulsates in our veins and we shall whirl round with their huge wheels and be like some dead and soulless machine ourselves; and the rich capitalist, operating from a distance, will suck us dry of what little of blood we still may have. They say that the tree is judged by its fruit; and so, let us judge Industrialism by the fruit that it has already borne in our midst. Consider the frightful condition of the villages bordering on Calcutta. We have mills, factories and chimneys on both banks of the Ganges; and what is the result ? Soot, dust and all unwholesomeness in air; even the green tree tops blasted and withered with smoke; and the Ganges itself a sink and drain of nameless filth. But consider further the frightful moral degradation which Industrialism has brought in its train. The mills have brought money—not wealth—but they have brought also a terrible increase of drunkenness; and the revenue of toddy-shops has multiplied a hundred-fold. Even in Europe a reaction has set in against the evils of unchecked Industrialism. It has been recognised that Industrialism reduces man to a machine, crushes out the fine moral sensibilities of nature, intensifies the cravings of the flesh by its pressure upon our physical organism and thus is the fruitful mother of many evils,

Industrialism means wealth, and plenty of it. But all this tide of wealth rolls into the pocket of the capitalist; it makes him a millionaire, a multi-millionaire; but it leaves the labourer very much where he was. This enormous concentration of wealth in the hands of the few leads inevitably to tyranny; and then the poor fight against this tyranny with strikes and combines. Christian Europe, within the last 200 years, has forsaken Christ and set up the mammon of Industrialism. Must we faithfully copy their mistakes and tread the path of sorrow that they too have trodden ?

Life is one and undivided. But it manifests itself both in the unit and in aggregate, in the individual as in the community. Both are true and both are pure. And neither must be pampered at the expense of the other. Industrialism lays far too great an emphasis on the importance of the individual; the result is that the community has suffered, while even the individual has not attained to a full, complete and harmonious development. And yet this Industrialism is the native product of Europe and as such comparatively harmless and innocuous there. But who can calculate the frightful evil which it will cause if transplanted to the sacred soil of India ?

Mimic Anglicism has become an obsession with us; we find its black footprint in every walk and endeavour of our life. We substitute meeting houses for temples; we perform stage-plays and sell pleasures in order to help charities. We hold lotteries in aid of our orphanages; we give up the national and healthful games of our country and introduce all sorts of foreign importations. We have become hybrid in dress, in thought, in sentiment and culture and are making frantic attempts even to be hybrids in blood. What wonder, then, that in this new pursuit of Western ideals we should forget that money is only a means to an end and not an end in itself ! But we must be-ware even now and listen to the wise warning of Bankim—a warning all too unheeded when it was first uttered :

> "A new trouble has arisen in our land. With English culture and English civilization, we have become deeply enamoured of material prosperity. The Englishman loves the outer splendours of life; this is the chief mark of his civilization; here in India this is his chief pre-occupation; and we also,

learning from his example, have taken this as the chief good of our life. From the Indus to the Brahmaputra, we have dislodged our ancient gods from their ancient tabernacles and have set up the image of this one god alone. We look with delight to commerce increasing by leaps and bounds; we turn with pleasure to the railways which have spread like a network over the land; and we stand with delighted wonder before the electric telegraph. But this one thing is a puzzle to Kamalakanta : How will your railways and telegraphs increase my mental happiness ? I find nothing but this worship of material prosperity in whatever I read or hear. Your newspapers, English and Bengalee, your magazines and periodicals, your speeches, debates and lectures—all are full of this one cry. 'Haro Haro bome bome' they all seem to utter, fall down and worship this golden image of Baal. Pour money upon money, for money is end and money is goal, money is religion and money is saluation. Do this for it will bring money; and don't do that, for that will bring none. Only increase money all you can. Railways and telegraphs bring forth money; therefore, worship in their tabernacle. Let money rain down from the heavens. Let the clash of it fill India from end to end. Money is prosperity; money is all. Therefore, worship money. The copper-bearded Englishman is the priest of this new worship and its sacred texts have to be recited from Mill and Adam Smith. In this worship of money, the English newspapers are drums and trumpets, the vernacular journals are clinking cymbals. Industry and training are the thank-offerings at this worship; its sacrifice is the heart and its fruit is eternal damnation. Then let us worship this great god of material prosperity; let us worship him with the waters of popular esteem, the leaves of deceipt and the sandal paste of sweet words. Come forward, Sri Priest, and repeat the sacred texts. Let us offer ancient culture as burnt-offering before this new god of wealth."

Agriculture, I have said already, is not sufficient to give us our subsistence. Trade and commerce we must adopt; only our road must not be the road of Industrialism. In the days of old, when our life was natural and normal, we had our own fashion

and method of trade—a fashion dictated by the law of our being, by the genius of our soul. Thus we find that when the season of agriculture was over, our peasants would weave their clothes and prepare other articles of domestic use. But in the present day, they are so stricken with disease, so unprovided with capital that when the operations of agriculture are over they have nothing else to do. Thus, our cottage industries have perished; and the Muslim-Industry of Bengal—once so prosperous and famous—has practically vanished. So also has vanished cotton-cultivation—one conducted on an extensive scale—but the secret of this seems to have died out in our midst. The brass-ware industry of Bengal—that also has practically disappeared, chiefly for lack of patronage; for, economic prudence aside, even our aesthetic taste has grown so coarse and vile that we prefer false and tawdry imitations to genuine and durable articles of value. Thus, all our national industries have vanished and with these have vanished our wealth and prosperity. But how to reconstruct these industries and restore a portion of our ancient affluence? Two things we must bear in mind. We must have no traffic with Industrialism; and we must remember that we are powerless to cope with Europe on Europe's own terms and in her special field.

Bearing this necessary caution in mind, let us see what we can do.

In the first place, we have to give up our luxury and licence—a luxury and licence which have affected not simply the rich and well-to-do but have filtered down even to the cottage of the cultivator. The temperance and restraint which will be necessary in order to sacrifice this luxury will be healthful and beneficent for our soul. It shall not dwarf our individual life but will awaken the powers of our latent self and so invigorate the whole of our social and national life. Thus, much from the point of view of national self-development. But even from the economic point of view, curtailment of luxuries which will mean non-importation of foreign articles will conserve our wealth and give a chance of new life to our dying industries and starved handicrafts.

Coming to details, it seems to me that in our attempt to rehabilitate our old industries, we shall have to bear the following points chiefly in mind :

1. We must give heed to the lessons of history.
2. We must abandon the path of European industrialism.
3. We must stop the denudation of villages and the consequent congestion of cities.
4. To do this we shall have to rehabilitate our villages.
5. But our villages can only be rehabilitated if we make them sanitary and thus, enable the peasant to pursue his avocations free from disease.
6. We must train up the agriculturist in the ways of useful handicrafts.
7. We must enquire into the commercial and industrial products of Bengal in the past.
8. We must start small business concerns all over the country with a view to produce those articles foı which our people have natural aptitude and skill.
9. We must stop importing foreign commercial products except such as are absolutely essential.
10. We must provide cheap capital for such industries as have a reasonable chance of being profitable; and with this end in view, we must start banking institutions in the different districts.

Such are some of the measures which we might adopt to improve agriculture and restore industries. But the question is who will adopt these measures? Will it be ourselves or the Government? With whom must the initiative and responsibility lie? That is a question which I shall deal with subsequently.

EDUCATION

In education, as in all other matters, we must look to our history and the natural genins of our being. To bring out the latenl strength of our manhood, to awaken our self-consciousness (to rouse from sleep the lion within us), to enable us to feel deeply and truly—this must be the main problem of education; and our education will only be then complete when our self-consciousness has been fully awakened, when our latent manhood has been fully developed. In former days, education was diffused in our country through many and various agencies and in many and various forms—in the household of the Guru, in the institutions

of domestic life, through "jatras" and "kathakatas," in the songs from Ramayana and Chandi, in Sankirtans, and in the Bratas and rituals of our women-folk. What the idea of our education was and how easily, naturally and vividly it was impressed on the minds of our countrymen, we can gather from a hundred little details and images of life. The ploughman of Bengal, as he followed his yoke, would sing to himself : "You know not true village, my soul; follow lies this field of life, which would give you gold if you tilled it well." And so the boatman of Bengal, as he plied his oar would sing : "Take up the helm, my soul, for I can row no more." And so the women, as with lighted lamp they moved towards the sacred tulsi plant, would croon thus to themselves : "Tulsi, thou art Narayana and Brindabana. I bow before thee; preserve my husband; I place this light at thy foot, keep me well in the future world." Even the tradesman, as he returned from mart and market-place would sing : "The day is gone and evening has come; ferry me over, O Lord." Again, after the marriage-knot is fastened, at the threshold of life, the first text which the wedded couple have to utter as they move step by step round the sacrificial fire is this : "Let us step first in honour of God"; and so again, at the seventh step, they say : "Let our hearts be one; let the gods make us one." So, when we make offering to the manes of our ancesctors, the last of the sacred verses is this : "From God to stocks and stones, let all be refreshed."

A country where the abiding and universal presence of the Eternal is so keenly and deeply felt—where the prophet, immersed in the love and glory of God, cries out in accents of passionate emphasis : "Nor wealth, nor woman, nor youth, nor song—I want nothing, O Lord, but devotion to Thee"—in such a land as this, need I say what the ideal of education was ? Or how easily, naturally and spontaneously it impressed itself upon the minds of people ?

But like other ideals, our ideal of education also has become mean and impoverished; and so what was easy and natural—we have made it complex and difficult. We have set up the huge structure of the University in order to diffuse our so-called high education; but has that been a success ? Perhaps it had become necessary at one time that education should be diffused through the medium of the English language; but this abnormal system

has brought many evils in its train and it will continue to be a source of evil in the days to come. For one thing, it has imparted an element of unnecessary Anglicism into our manners and modes af life—so that in outer seeming it might almost appear as if the educated Bengalee had little organic touch with the heart of his countrymen. Then, again, this education has made us familiar not with things but with words; it has made us clever but it has not made us men. We trot out a number of set phrases and formulae and struggle under an unnecessary load of words; but words are not things—a distinction which we should do well to bear in mind. We have acquired a despicable habit of looking down with contempt upon those who have not received this English education of ours; we call them 'illiterate' and 'uneducated' and sneer at their ignorance. But these uneducated countrymen have hearts and sympathies; they worship their gods, they are hospitable to guests, they feel for the suffering and distress of their neighbours; they have been humanized and civilized by the education of things more than we have been by our education of words. To me it seems perfectly clear, therefore, that if we want to lead our newly-awakened national consciousness in the paths of true knowledge, education will have to be diffused through the medium of our own vernacular and not through the unwholesome medium of English. The education which we now receive is a borrowed and imitated article; it does not co-operate with the natural genius of our being; and hence it is powerless to enrich the life-blood of our soul.

And not this alone. We adopted an elaborate machinery in order to spread our false education; and the pressure of this huge and cumbrous machine is crushing out the soul of real culture. There is no money in the land; students can't buy books, can't pay their fees; and yet we prescribe for them five books where one would be sufficient. Even in our childhood, education was a much simpler affair than it has now become; for now we are told that true education can never be dispensed except in huge palaces and to the accompaniment of much pomp and ado. To restrain foreign and unnecessary luxury ought to be one of the chief ends of true education; and yet the machinery of modern education is putting a premium upon this luxury and indulgence. We are told that huge buildings are necessary for hostels and messes; but students who become accustomed to dwell in these

palatial residences—will they be able to go back to their village-homes and dwell there in content? And after all, what do we gain by all this multiplication of means and machinery? We turn out B.A.'s and M.A.'s by the thousand from the University mills just as buttons and pin-heads may be turned out in English factories. But do we build up men? Do we awaken the latent self-consciousness and self-respect of our people. This so-called High Education makes people conceited and purblind, ignorant of the true interests of their higher self and slaves to an idol of false knowledge and false, imitative no-science. And I ask! Why this waste of money ane energy in the pursuit of a false ideal?

Some people plume themselves upon the fact that in recent years provision for teaching in Bengalee has been made in the Calcutta University. The credit for this innovation, such as it is, belongs, we have heard, to Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee; and if that is so, he is undoubtedly to our thanks. But after all, what is this tardy and grudging recognition that has been extended to our language and literature? The university authorities—proof in their panoply of colossal ignorance—do not allow Bengali poetry to be included in the University curriculum. They forget or perhaps they do not know what infinite wealth the storehouse of our literature contains; and hence this scanty and contemptuous largess to the claims of the Mother! But I proclaim with confidence that our education will be abortive, one-sided and incomplete so long as you do not free it from the encumbrance of machinery, so long as you do not spread it through the medium of your own vernacular.

One word about Primary Education. Some people are of opinion that we must have compulsory education for our masses or they will never be men! Have they seriously considered this proposition? or do they want compulsion simply because compulsion prevails in other countries? In the first place, the premise upon which they proceed is entirely wrong. Our masses are men—not inferior in manhood to their educated countrymen. If to humanise the heart be the object of education, then our indigenous institutions have done that already for our people; and the machinery of the West is not needed for this purpose. I grant indeed that of education there can be no end and that the more we have of it the better for all. But for Heaven's sake

do not reduplicate your university-business. Do not set up another huge and soulless machine and thus grind out the very germs of future life and growth. Your centralized education with its elaborate machinery of check, routine and inspection is out of place in this land. Revert to indigenous agencies if you want real education or the result will be a vast failure.

To sum up the whole matter : (1) You must make your education real; (2) Your knowledge must be of things and not words; (3) Your education must be in consonance and harmony with the genius of your national being and its chief object must be the development of that genius; and (4) the chief medium of your education must be Bengali.

So far about the measures to be adopted. But the question again arises : Who is to adopt these measures ? That question I must deal with now.

CAUSES OF FAILURE

One word must be mentioned at the very outset. Hitherto, all our attempts have ended in huge failure; we have been able to achieve nothing, to accomplish nothing. The reason for this ghastly failure seems plain enough to me; we, the educated few, have never co-operated with the masses of our countrymen. We are proud of our education, proud of our wealth and proud of our caste; and this three-fold pride has so deadened and blinded our senses that, in all our essay and endeavours we leave quite out of account those who are the flesh, blood, and backbone of the land. And curiously enough, all this pride of ours springs from utter emptiness and poverty. We are proud of wealth because our wealth stands at zero; and we are proud of education because our education is utterly false and unreal. How will the city-bred Babu, who is paid by the month, who can jingle a few rupees in his pocket—how will such a one sit side by side with the 'horny-handed' son of the soil ? And the case is a hundred-fold worse with our pride of caste. In our social structure of today, there is not the slightest "Barnasram Dharma" of which the Shastras tell us. Our Brahmins have given up their Brahminical avocation; they are clerks, lawyers, barristers, judges, owners of shoe-stores, lessees of distilleries; they are adepts in the blundering reception of mispronounced texts; but of the Shastras they know little and

care less. As it is with Brahmins so it is also with Baidyas and Kayasthas! Then, why should these people boast of their Brahminism and Baidyaism and Kayathaism? I say nothing of the good or evil of Barnasram as a social institution. You may build it up anew if you like; build it up and readjust it to the conditions of modern life. But why drag about the spectre of Barnasram? Why raise a dead phantom in order to create and perpetuate differences between yourself and your brother? Those who constitute 40 out of 46 millions of our countrymen,—those who earn our bread with the sweat of their brow—those who in their grinding poverty have kept alive the torch of their ancient culture and ancient polity—those whom our English civilization and English culture and English law-courts have yet been powerless entirely to corrupt—those whom the oppression of zemindars and mahajans have failed wholly to crush—are we, a corrupt and effete handful, are we their betters and superiors? We boast of our Hinduism; but with our false pride of caste we are stabbing Hinduism at its source. Even now while there is time, let us perceive our fearful and heedless blunder. In our oppressed and down-trodden fellow-brethren let us recognise the image of Narayana; before that sacred and awful image, let us abandon all false pride of birth and breed and let us bend our heads in reverence and true humility. These seething millions of your land—be they Christians or Mahomedans or Chandals—they are your brothers; embrace them as such, co-operate with them and only then will your labours be crowned with success.

SUGGESTED SCHEME OF WORK

Combined and harmonious work—this then must be our motto. But what must be our plan? With your permission, I shall give you the outline of a scheme, such as has suggested itself to me. Government has divided our provinces among districts—and for the purpose of our work it will be best to go on the basis of these territorial divisions. Our first step will be to organise all the villages of each district into a number of village-groups or unions. Where one village is sufficiently large and populous, that by itself will constitute one union or group. In the case of smaller villages, several of them will be combined to

form one group of union. Then a census must be taken of the adult males of each village union; these will form the primary village assemblies; and they will elect from among themselves a panchayet or executive body of five members. This panchayet or executive body will have the sole administration of the village-group in its hands. It will look to sanitation; it will arrange for water supply; it will establish night-schools; it will arrange for industrial and agricultural education; in short the domestic economy of the village group will be entirely in the hands of the panchayet. Besides, in each village-group there will be a public granary; each agricultural proprietor will contribute to this granary according to his quantity of land; and in years of drought and scarcity, the resources of this public granary will be drawn upon to feed the people.

In case of petty disputes, civil or criminal, the panchayet will be the sole deciding authority; but in the case of large disputes. they will report to the district civil and criminal courts; and their reports will be treated as the sole plaints or complaints in such cases.

In the next place, the primary assembly of each village group, will, according to its population, select from five to twenty-five members and will exercise the following powers :

(1) It will exercise general supervision over the working of the panchayets and the affairs of the village group.
(2) It will devise ways and means for the better performance of the functions of panchayets; and it will be directly responsible for the education and santiation of the district-capital.
(3) It will devise means for the improvement of agriculture and cottage industries.
(4) It will supervise the sanitation of the villages included in each village group; and will be directly responsible for the sanitation of the district council.
(5) It will start such industrial and business concerns as may be best suited to further the resources of the district.
(6) It will employ chowkidars and peace-officers for the villages.
(7) It will have sole charge of the district police.
(8) The civil and criminal counts of the district will not be

under these district assemblies. They will be directly under the High Court.

(9) Each district assembly will elect its own President and will appoint sub-committees for the discussion of different subjects.

(10) For the provision of cheap capital, each district assembly will open a bank; this bank will have branches in each village group.

(11) Government officials will have no connection with these primary and district assemblies.

(12) The district assemblies will have power to raise by taxation the money necessary for their requirements.

(13) Necessary laws will have to be passed to place the primary and district assemblies on a legal basis.

(14) The present local and district boards will be abolished.

(15) Necessary modification will be made in the power and authority at present exercised by the district magistrates. and

(16) Necessary steps must be taken to bring the district assemblies in due subordination to the provincial legislature and executive authority.

Such, in rough outline, is the scheme that I propose; and it seems to me that without some such scheme you cannot succeed in your endeavours. I do not wish to call this system Home Rule, Swaraj or Self-Government. I propose only to revert to those institutions which formerly existed in this country—institutions which grew and developed with our growth, and which have a peculiar harmony with the genius of our national character. Our common people may be illiterate but they are not uneducated; they can well discriminate between what is good and what is evil; and I am confident that they possess in a very large measure that capacity and efficiency which is required for the management of their own affairs. Hence, I believe that the experiment of co-operating with them in primary and district assemblies is bound to succeed and will be fruitful of good.

I have said that my proposal means only reversion to our older social institutions. Let me examine this matter more fully. The King's authority was checked and limited in various ways in our country. The sovereigns received revenue; the Brahmins laid

down laws; but the internal economy of the village group was managed by the people themselves.

The primary assemblies of which I have spoken have always existed in our country; the panchayet also is an indigenous institution and has always been in existence; only the principle of election is new. Or rather election gives an explict, and tangible form to that which formerly was implicit and inchoate. The panchayet was a natural out-growth of our ancient village community; it consisted of those five persons who naturally and easily emerged into prominence by their qualities of character and intellect. The powers exercised by them were precisely the same that I have laid down in my scheme; and authority of the panchayet lasted only so long as the community at large tacitly accepted their authority. Even our homely village proverb reminds us that a man would continue to be "mandal" (chief) only so long as people would accept his authority. No doubt, externally, there is a good deal of distinction between the tacit acceptance of former days and the election of the present day; but I refuse to admit that in essence there is any difference between them. Hence I am emboldened to think that the system that I have proposed in bred in our very bone and as such stands a large change of success.

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

But an objection may arise. It may be said : "If this is so, if your proposed system is a reversion to older methods, why do you seek to substitute election for natural selection ? Why do you introduce your district assemblies in supersession of the simple village assembly ?" My answer to this would be simple : "Life even among us is not so simple as it was; it has become complex, difficult and intricate. Hence what was inchoate requires to be systematised and regularised. Besides, the division into districts has established new relations and ties between villages and district towns. The old centres of village life have shifted place and the people have become accustomed to look upon the district and sub-divisional towns as the natural centres of life and activity. It is best to recognise these 'accomplished facts' for what they are; and hence, in the outline given bv me I propose to treat the district as a sort of magnified village assembly.

Another objection also may be raised. It may be said : "Why will the Government entrust so much power to you ?" My answer is : "Our demand is not extravagant : if we cannot manage our own affairs, what else can we do ? Besides, if 150 years of your rule have not made us fit for the exercise of this modicum of power, will this fitness ever come ? Again, my demand is for nothing new; it is for what we have always possessed and always exercised. I demand nothing about your provincial legislative council or provincial executive council ; I only want that we should manage the economy of our own lives. And I say that this is a fit, proper and legitimate demand to make. We are neither Zulus nor Hottentots; we are a civilized people; why then must we be deprived of the legitimate rights of a civilized people ?

Some again may say : "There is so much of anarchism in the land that it will lead to fearful abuses if the people are entrusted with any large share of power." This is a superficial view entirely. In the first place, those whom we designate as anarchists are not anarchists in very deed and truth. No doubt, they are seditionists; they have been guilty of offences against the Government; and the stability of the sovereign power requires that they should be adequately punished. But while acknowledging the guilt of these seditious young men, it is necessary to enquire also as to why it is that they have become seditious. So far one can judge, there are none, even among the socalled anarchists, who want actually to oust the British Government in India. Then how is it that these people abandon themselves to seditious ? It seems to me that the reason lies deep. Since the days of the Swadeshi Movement our young men have been possessed with the ardent desire to serve their country. At the time of the Ardhodoy Joga, and again at the time of the Damodar Floods of 1913, this desire for service found noble vent in action; and the help rendered by our young men on these two occasions has been repeatedly acknowledged even by high officials of the Government. But unfortunately much of this noble energy and zeal goes utterly to waste : there is no permanent channel through which it can be made to flow; there is no work of durable utility to which we have been able to apply it. Hence a feeling of impatience and despair has arisen in the minds of our young men; and sedition is the outer manifestation of this feeling of impatience and despair. As I have said already, crime must be punished, sedition must be checked; but it will be a part of wise

and courageous statesmanship not simply to check the symptom but to cure the disease—not simpiy punish sedition but to root out the deapseated cause which gives rise to it. Our young men labour under the impression that the bureaucracy will give them no opportunity of doing real service to the country. This impression must be removed of the mere bandying of hard words will serve no useful purpose.

Even granting that hard measures are necessary to stampt out sedition, what must be done. Punish those who are seditious; but as for the rest, give them opportunity for even larger co-operation in the affairs of administration. Because some few in the country have been affected with sedition, surely it would not be the part of wisdom to deprive the rest of their rightful share in the administration of the country. That will be to encourage sedition and not to check it : it will be evil for you and evil for us. Nay more, for you it will be evil merely; for us it means death; for it will utterly kill and stamp out our newly awakened national life. If you do not accept my assurance then I entreat you to appoint a small committee consisting of men in whom our countrymen have faith and confidence : and direct this committee to enquire exhaustively into the causes and cure of sedition.

Among officials there are some who think that the majority of our countrymen are in sympathy with the anarchists. This also is a mistake. As I have said already, there are two phases in the activities of the so-called anarchists. On the one had there is burning zeal to be of service to the country; and it is this which attracts our countrymen towards them. But then again there are the seditious and criminal activities of these men; and I can assure the Government that our countrymen have no sympathy for these. Nevertheless, what is the cause of this misapprehension on the part of Government officials ? It seems to me that the reason lies in what I have suggested already. Our people recognise that these young men have hearts to feel and a burning zeal for service; hence they think that instead of being utterly suppressed, the activities of these young enthusiasts ought to be given proper field and scope. The officials have a dim perception of this attitude of our countrymen; but they misread its meaning and significance and hence, the suspicion which lurks in their mind. I think that it is our duty to point out the mistake of the officials and at the same time to explain our real attitude towards the anarchists : and

hence, I have spoken of this matter at such length.

One further objection that may be raised to my scheme will also require consideration here. Our officials may say that there is no harmony between Hindus and Mahomedans and no harmony again between the different castes of the Hindus. Under such circumstances how is united action possible for them ? My answer will be this : "If there are differences between Hindus and Hindus and between Hindus and Mahomedans, it is want of opportunity for united action which is intensifying these differences. Allow people to co-operate in the service of the country and their disagreements will vanish. Besides, as for the so-called differences between Hindus and Mahomedans much of it is a myth. Before the Swadeshi Movement it never existed at all; and it is only the interested machinations of a few self-seekers which have created the little of disunion that now exists. Even now in the interior of Bengal, Hindus and Mahomedans are united together by the sweet ties of village relationship; they speak the same speech, follow the same pursuits and even their social observances are much the same. Where then can there be any real, substantial ground of difference between these communities ?

One last objection I shall deal with here—which is this. There are some among us who seem to think that Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Officers should have some connection with our proposed primary and district assemblies. That is a proposition which I emphatically deny. Considered from the point of practical efficiency, it is possible that the connection of Government officials may be beneficial for our new assemblies; but the object of my scheme is not simply to secure practical efficiency but to reawaken our habits of united and harmonious work. If officials cling to our side even in the performance of these humble duties, our national capacity for work will be stunted and will never reach its full development. From my point of view, therefore, it is better that the quality of the work should suffer if only it trains us in habits of co-operation and united work.

DEMANDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leaving aside the domestic concerns with which I have been dealing so long, I shall ask your permission to discuss a few larger questions as well. In the first place, there is the demand for

military service about which Sir S.P. Sinha spoke at the Bombay Congress. Our eyes have been opened : it is you who have helped to open them. And wherever we turn, we behold that the people of a country always bear arms in defence of their country. Why must not the same privilege be accorded to us ? You may have an Arms Act if you will, but you must administer this Act uniformly in all cases. Otherwise we shall feel our manhood insulted ; and no union can be based on a sense of insult. Your Macaulay insulted us once : that insult we accepted at one time and we are doing penance for it even now. But neither we nor you can any longer cherish the delusion that the Bengalees are a race of cowards. Do not forget the heroism displayed by the members of the Bengal Ambulance Corps. Remember also the test to which you put us when you invited us to form the Bengalee Double Company. For a hundred years and more you had never allowed us to bear arms; and yet here the call to arms came suddenly and all at once to us. If we had failed to respond to your challenge, would not the brand of incompetence have been fixed for ever on our brow ? That was the light in which we read your challenge, and we accepted it too. And you will admit that we came out successfully from the trial. Such being the case, may we not advance the claim to bear arms with legitimate pride and confidence ? May we not claim also that in the army all distinctions will be abolished as between Europeans and Indians ? Why should it be the Europeans only who can be Lieutenants, Captains and Colonels ? And why should we be condemned for ever to rot as Jemadars and Havildars ? Remember that the Red Army with which you conquered India was a Bengalee Army. If you talk of fitness, my answer is that it is our fitness which we want to be proved. We wantequal opportunities : we do not seek any favour.

There is another reason why we are anxious to join military service. The world-conflict that is raging in Europe today has taught us one lesson at least, viz., the instability of political friendships and alliances. We find that in these political collisions, the friend of today is the foe of tomorrow. We find also that hordes of Japaness are flocking every year to our city. This War has been immensely remunerative to Japan; and Japan is the disciple of Germany. Who then can predict whether a now world-war will not break out when the present conflagration has been extinguished ? And in case such a war breaks out, will Japan be

our friend or foe ? I can confidently declare that Bengal wants neither Germans nor Japanese nor Russians. The Bengalee wants to serve and defend his country in harmony and co-operation with you. Hence, it is that the Bengalee wants to enter the army; and I earnestly entreat you—do not quench this desire, do not insult out manhood by rejecting our prayer.

There is another aspect of this question of military service. In Calcutta an effort is now being made to train up our boys in habits of military service. It is the duty of the Government to foster and co-operate with the endeavour, and, in order that this may be done, the Boy Scout Movement should be cherished and vigorously encouraged. This movement will not only train up our boys in habits of military service, it will make them hardy, patient, helpful, serviceable, and imbued with the spirit of deep reverence and discipline.

But do not think that we are mindful only of our rights and overlook our responsibilities. Poor as the Bengalee is, he is prepared to raise such money as may be necessary to give him military training and enable him to join the army. The Bengalee knows and appreciates that there can be no rights without corresponding sacrifices.

And is not the war-loan that is now being raised a proof of our spirit of sacrifice ? I am quite sure that the war-loan will be a success, that we shall contribute as much as we can and also procure from others as much as we can. Considered simply from the point of view of Economics, the war-loan can only be a source of less to us. The money that is raised will be spent almost wholly in England and in Europe; and very little will come back to the people of the land. Considered from the view-point of Economics, then, the war-loan is a source of loss. But it is not the nature of the Bengalee, it is not the genius of our people, to considered questions simply from the point of view of Economics and worldly prudence. The Bengalee knows that the relation between his country and England is not material but also moral and spiritual —a relation not of money but of hearts. Therefore, I am confident that the Bengalee will do his best—the best that lies within his strength—to make the war-loan a success.

We have been hearing even from our childhood that the English have done us an immense deal of good and that we ought therefore, to be graceful to them for evermore, I am free to admit

that by holding before our eyes the ideal of an alien culture and civilization, the English have roused us from the stupor, torpidity and lethargy of spirit into which we had gradually come to sink. I am free to admit that by thus rousing us from the sleep and indolence of ages, the English have helped to awaken our national consciousness and to re-establish our national vitality. In that sense I am free to admit that the advent of the English has been a divine dispensation and has been fruitful of immense benefit to our people. And I am confident that the praise and gratitude which are their due for these manifold services will flow forth in an abundant measure from our hearts. But let us look to another aspect of the question. What was England before her advent to India ? What was her position in the hierarchy of world-powers ? Can it be denied that the sovereignty of India increased the power and prestige of England a hundred-fold and more ? If then India has reason to be grateful to England, is not England also under a corresponding debt of immense gratitude to India ? Of the gratitude of India, proofs have been forthcoming again and again. Of the gratitude of England, the proof is now to come; and if you refuse to grant our legitimate prayer, we shall take it that your gratitude is an empty and meaningless phrase.

You know—in your hearts you cannot but admit—that we are fully entitled to the right that we demand. Do not seek to hide the truth by useless argument, do not deceive your inner consciousness. Seek rather to conciliate the restless energy of our newly-awakened life; foster in the depths of your heart the self-consciousness which you have helped to arouse. Stretch forth your hand across the funeral pyre that burns so lurid and grim over the battle-plains of Europe. We shall clasp your hand in ours, and our union will be true and eternal—blissful to you and blissful unto us.

To my countrymen I say—work so that your speech may bear fruit in deed. We want energy, we want devotion, we want co-operation. You must sacrifice self, sacrifice spite, sacrifice all pettiness on the altar of national service. There is no room for impatience and none for despair. The right that I demand on your behalf is just, is proper, is reasonable, consonant with the law of our nature, with the law of humanity, with the law of God. No power on earth can deprive us of this right. Only come forward and repeat in chorus : "We demand

this right, it is ours and we demand it." Be ye Hindus, Mussalmans or Christians, come forward and repeat in chorus : "This right is ours and we demand it." Be ye Brahmins, Baidyas, Sudras, or Chandals, come forward and repeat in unison : "This demand is ours and we make it." I know of no sovereign power which can resist the united demand of a united people. Only come forward, my brothers, and repeat your demand in chorus. Are you a Christian ? Take the name of Christ and repeat in your heart : "I demand." Are you a Mussalman ? Take the name of Allah and repeat ; "I demand." Are you a Hindu ? Think of Narayana and say : "I demand." It is the Mother who calls; come one and come all. The field of work is vast and all are needed for help.

Bande Mataram

PART II

16

CHITTARANJAN DAS

N.C. CHATTERJEE

Chitta Ranjan Das, whose life is a landmark in the history of India's struggle for freedom, was endearingly called 'Deshabandhu' (Friend of the country). Born on 5 November 1870 in Calcutta, he belonged to an upper middle class Vaidya family of Telirbagh, Vikrampur, in the Dacca district. His father, Bhuban Mohan Das, was a reputed Solicitor of the Calcutta High Court. An ardent member of the Brahmo Samaj, he was also well-known for his intellectual and journalistic pursuits. For his generous disposition and extravagant habits, he became an adjudicated insolvent towards the end of his career (d. 1914). Chitta Ranjan's patriotic ideas were greatly influenced by his father's. Chitta Ranjan was the second child and eldest son of his parents. His youngest brother was P.R. Das, a Judge of the Patna High Court. In 1897 Chitta Ranjan married Basanti Devi, daughter of Barada Nath Haldar, Dewan of Bijni Estate in Assam.

After receiving his early education at the London Missionary Society's Institution at Bhowanipore (Calcutta), Chitta Rajan passed the Entrance examination in 1885 as a private candidate. He graduated from the Presidency College in 1890. He then went to England to compete for the I.C.S.; but he was "the last man out" in his year. Therefore he joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1894.

In his intellectual pursuits Chitta Ranjan was fond of Shelley, Browning and Keats in particular, and in general of European literature including plays. He was deeply interested in Religion

and Philosophy: he studied Brahmo religious books as also Vaishnav literature; teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa and the ideas of Swami Vivekananda impressed him too. He was conversant with the writings of Bankim Chandra, D.L. Roy, Girish Ghosh and Tagore. In later life, while in prison, he used to read books on political philosophy. It was Bankim Chandra who partly influenced him in his political ideas. Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya also influenced him, making his nationalism dynamic and kinetic. While at the Presidency College, Chitta Ranjan was a leading figure of the Students' Association; and from Surendra Nath Banerjee he took his first lessons in public service and elocution. While in England during 1890-94, he gave electioneering speeches on behalf of Dadabhai Naoroji, besides an address at a protest meeting, presided over by Gladstone, in connection with offensive anti-Indian remarks made by John Maclean.

In 1894 Das came back to India and enrolled himself as a Barrister of the Calcutta High Court. But he did not get the backing badly needed to make a good start in the profession. The Calcutta Bar was then crowded with great personalities like Griffith Evans, T. Palit, Monmohan Ghosh, W.C. Bonnerjee and T.A. Apcar. His anxiety to remove the stain of insolvency on his father's name made him all the more impatient. So he shifted his practice to Mofussil courts and began to make his mark as a criminallawyer. It, however, took some time to render his financial position satisfactory. Like his father, Chitta Ranjan had also to take shelter of the Insolvency Court.

In 1907 he appeared as the defence lawyer of Brahmabhandhav Upadhyaya and Bhupendranath Dutta who were prosecuted for sedition. His abilities as an advocate evoked general admiration, though he did not succeed in baffling the prosecution. The turning-point in his career came when he was called upon to appear on behalf of Aurobindo Ghose in Alipore Bomb Case (1908). It was due to his brilliant handling of the case that Aurobindo was ultimately acquitted. In his eloquent advocacy in in this case he concluded: " . . . . a man like this who is being charged . . . . stands not only before the bar in this court but also stands before the bar of the High Court of History . . . . he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity . . . . his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas

and lands . . . . ". Success in this case brought Das to the forefront of professional and political platform.

Chitta Ranjan was the defence counsel in the Dacca Conspiracy Case (1910-11). He was an adept in civil law as much as in criminal law. His success in the Dumraon Raj Adoption Case bears testimony to his eminence as a civil lawyer. Within a very short period he built up a fabulosuly lucrative practice. In 1920 his professional monthly income rose to Rs. 50,000.

In 1913, when Chitta Ranjan rose almost to the top of his profession, he took the rather unusal prosedure of paying his as also his father's time-barred joint debts for which they had gone to the Insolvency Court. This act, prompted by his high moral sense, made a profound impression on his countrymen.

Early in life Chitta Ranjan gave vent to his intense patriotic feelings as a student of the Presidency College and also while away in England during 1890-94. In 1901 he financially contributed to support the agitation in South Africa. He was associated with the revolutionary organisation, the Anusilan Samity. During the Anti-Partition Agitation he played his role as a co-worker of S.N. Banerjea, Bepin Pal and Aurobindo Ghose; he gave lectures on Swadeshi movement and associated himself with two nationalist organs—the *New India* and the *Bande Mataram.* He also raised his voice against Curzon's Indian Universities Bill and indictment against the Bengalees.

In was, however, not before 1917 that Das came to the forefront of nationalist politics. In that year he was invited to preside over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Bhowanipore. At the Conference Chitta Ranjan gave in Bengali his memorable presidential speech, animated by lofty idealism and patroitic fire. Chitta Ranjan's political career was brief but meteoric. In course of only eight years (1917-25) he rose into all-India fame by virtue of his ardent patriotism, sterling sincerity and oratorical power. Further his advent into the political field in 1917 took place at a crucial moment.

Patriotism was a consuming passion with Chitta Ranjan—a part of his religion and "not an imitation of European politics". It was echoed in his speech at a meeting held at Mymensingh in October, 1917. In the field of Indian nationalism Deshabandhu was a seer; he had no doubt about the final victory of the cause and the fulfilment of India's cultural and spiritual mission in the

world.

In 1917 Chitta Ranjan played a significant role in the controversy over the election of Mrs. Annie Besant as President of the Indian Nation Congress for its Calcutta Session. During this period (1917-18) he also took part in the agitation against the Government policy of internment and deportation under the Defence of India Act. On the eve of the Calcutta Session (1917) of the Congress, he had been on a lecturing tour in Eastern Bengal, addressing large gatherings on Self-Government. In his impassioned address on the Self-Government resolution at the Congress Session, he affirmed : "I want the power to build my own constitution in a way which is suited to this country".

In 1918, both at the Congress special session in Bombay and at the Annual Session in Delhi, Das opposed the scheme of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms as wholly inadequate and disappointing. The demand for Provincial Autonomy was successfully propounded in the teeth of vehement opposition from Mrs. Besant and others. In 1919 Chitta Ranjan went to the Punjab as a member of the non-official Jallianwala Bagh Enquiry Committee. At the Amritsar Congress (1919) he made the first advocacy of obstruction while opposing the idea of co-operation with the Government in the implementation of the 1919 Reforms.

In 1920 at a special session of the Congress held at Calcutta under the presidency of Lajpat Rai, Gandhiji gave his famous programme of Non-Cooperation with the Government. Das sought some changes in it but in vain. He, however, had the support of Pal, Malaviya, Jinnah and Mrs. Besant. Three months later the Congress met at Nagpur where he, however, accepted Gandhiji's lead and came back to Calcutta to renounce his large practice at the Bar. The whole nation was deeply impressed to see this supreme act of self-sacrifice. Deshabandhu now threw himself heart and soul into the movement. Besides the Non-Cooperation Movement, the large-scale exodus of the Coolies from the Assam tea gardens and the strike of the Assam-Bengal railway employees engaged his attention in 1921. The same year he was elected President for the Congress Session to be held at Ahmedabad.

In its repressive measures the Government declared as illegal the Congress Volunteers' organisation which took a leading part in the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales (1921). Deshabandhu decided to defy the arbitrary government order.

Along with Subhash Bose, Kiran Sankar Roy and many others, his wife Basanti Devi, son Chira Ranjan and sister Urmila Devi were arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. After his release in 1922, he was elected President for the Congress Session at Gaya.

With the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement at the instance of Gandhi", following the Chauri Chaura incident, the whole country went into despondency. At this critical hour Deshabandhu endeavoured to give a new orientation to Indian politics through his Council-Entry programme, i.e., "Non-Cooperation from within the Councils". He, however, met with vehement opposition from the Mahatma and the "No-changers". At the Gaya Congress C. Rajagopalachari led the Council-Entry opposition. His motion being lost, Deshabandhu resigned the presidentship. Thereafter he organised the Swarajya Party within the Congress in collaboration with Motilal Nehru, the Ali brothers, Ajmal Khan, V.J. Patel, Pratap Guha Roy and others. It was initially known as the Congress-Swaraj-Khilafat Party. In spite of the bitter criticism launched by the "No-changers" like Shyam Sundar Chakraborty and J.L. Banerjee, the Jalpaiguri Conference was organised by the Swarajists, Maulana Azad was elected President of the Congress special session at Delhi, where the programme of Council-Entry was approved. The programme was later confirmed at the Cocanada Session.

At the General Election of 1923 the Swarajists swept Bengal. Deshabandhu spurned the offer of Lord Lytton to take the responsibility of the Transferred Departments. In the Council he followed the policy of smashing the official and semi official machinations, despite the Government's repressive measures. Chitta Ranjan's policy of Council-Entry was vindicated by the Government's defeat on the Budget. He not only succeeded in killing Dyarchy in Bengal but also in shaking the Bureaucracy in India to its very foundations.

In 1924 the Swarajists captured the seats of the Calcutta Corporation. Deshabandhu was elected the first Mayor of the Corporation. He proved to be an ideal Mayor of the Corporation. He proved to be an ideal Mayor in every respect. He was re-elected as Mayor in the next year. In 1923 he presided over the All India Trade Union Congress at Lahore, and in 1924 at Calcutta. In 1925 Deshabandhu was the President of the Bengal Provincial

Conference held at Faridpur. In this last Presidential Address he put forth his ideas on Swaraj and Dominion Status.

Deshabandhu wanted "Swaraj for the masses, not for the classes". To him, "Swaraj is Government by the people and for the people". In his last political testament (Faridpur, 1925) he made out a strong case for Dominion Status. He held : "Dominion Status today is in no sense servitude. . . (but) an alliance by consent. . . for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation."

Further, he believed in non-violent and constitutional methods for the realisation of national independence. He explained : "I am one of those who hold to non-violence on principle. . . It is for India to show light to the world—Swaraj by non-violence and Swaraj by the people". (Presidential speech, Gaya Session of the Congress, 1922).

An advocate of communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim unity, Chitta Ranjan effected, in 1923, the Bengal Pact between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal, though opposed by a section of the Congress.

In the economic field, Das stressed the need of constructive work in villages. He did not favour the idea of mere industrialisation and held : "Industrialisation reduces man to a machine". For the re-construction of the 'cottage' and 'national' industries he wanted the agriculturists to be trained up "in the ways of useful handicrafts."

A champion of national education and vernacular medium, he felt that the masses should be properly educated to participate in the nationalist movement. He deprecated the prevalent Western system of education that would only promote "a kind of soulless culture". He was associated with the foundation of the 'National Council of Education' and other similar institutions such as the 'Gauriya Sarvavidyayatan' and 'Calcutta Vidyapath.' In 1921 he presided over the National Educational Conference held at Vikrampur.

Chitta Ranjan also made his mark as a poet and an essayist. The 'Malancha', his first book of verse, was published in 1895. Later four more volumes of lyrics were published—'Mala', 'Antaryami', 'Kishore-Kishoree' and 'Sagar-Sangit'. He contributed short stories and articles to different journals. As a journalist his contribution was likewise note-worthy. He started a literary

quarterly, the *Narayana*, in 1914, and an evening daily, the *Banglar Katha*, in 1922, both in Bengali. In 1923 he founded the Swarajya Party organ, the *Forward*, and in 1924 the official organ of the Calcutta Corporation, the *Municipal Gazette*.

Chitta Ranjan was ostentatious in his mode of living till he joined the Non-Cooperation Movement! after 1921 he led a simple life. His religious and social outlook was liberal. Under the Brahmo influence he was first a Vedantist, but later showed learnings towards the 'Sakta' (Mother-cult) and Vaishnavism. He was against caste-discrimination and untouchability. A believer in women's emancipation, he supported the spread of female education and widow re-marriage. An advocate of intercaste marriage, he gave his own daughters in marriage in Brahmin and Kayastha families.

Chitta Ranjan's munificence in the social field was proverbial; there were innumerable cases of his private charity. He made over his property to a trust for the country's service. At his Bhowanipore residence is now located the hospital named Chitta Ranjan Seva Sadan.

Chitta Ranjan passed away on 16 June 1925 at Darjeeling at the age of fifty five only. His mortal body was taken back to Calcutta where the last rities were performed. Thousands of people with Gandhiji at their head joined the over two-mile-long funeral procession to pay homage to the departed leader.

Great as a jurist, Chitta Ranjan was the greatest and most dynamic leader of the then Bengal. He was an eloquent exponent of her thought and culture. Above all, he was an apostle of Indian nationalism. In the words of Tagore, "the best gift that Chittaranjan left for his countrymen is not any particular political or social programme but the creative force of a great aspiration that has taken a deathless from in the sacıifice which his life represented."

17

CHITTARANJAN DAS

HUMAYUN KABIR*

Every great national movement throws up a number of resplendent personalities who are partey its creators and partly its creation. They are its creation, for without the background and impulse provided by the movement, their throught and action could not have taken shape, or even they did, would have remained still-born and ineffective. They are also its creators, for they help to give form and direction to urges and impulses which till their emergence had stirred only in the subconscious mind of the people. Great men help to formulate and express the hopes and aspirations of an age, and in doing so, bring their realisation within the range of practical politics.

The non-cooperation movement of 1919 was one such upsurge of the people's spirit in India. Many great men had worked to prepare the stage for the emergence of a world figure like Mahatma Gandhi. Without the contribution and the services of his forerunners, he could not have played the role that destiny allotted to him. Nor did he emerge like a solitary peak that thrusts upward in the midst of an unbroken plain. When the earth heaves with turmoil and untest, a whole mountain range rises, even though some peaks may be taller then others. Those were heroic days and, throughout the length and breadth of India, thousands of ordinary men and women were touched with a new spirit of hope and endeavour.

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India produced a galaxy of stars in which Mahatma Gandhi was the brightest, but there were also others of the first magnitude. And what a galaxy it was which contained stars like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Maulana Mohammed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Sardar Vallabbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

C.R. Das was active politics for barely six years, and yet he established himself in the heart of the Indian people as one of their greatest leaders. What is still more remarkable, he rose within this brief period from agitational politics to statesmanship of the highest order. This seems surprising only to those who do not know that his whole life had been a preparation for this consummation. C.R. Das was a great lawyer, but his most successful cases were those in which he used the instrument of British law to advance. India's national interests. He was also a poet and literary figure of high standing and higher promise. All his writings were, however, directed to one end ! the conservation and enrichment of Indian culture and the liberation of her spirit from the domination of the West. C.R. Das had also worked for social and economic uplift of India, for he believed that only in this way could India achieve her liberty.

Once politics claimed him, C.R. Das threw himself heart and soul into the struggle for India's emancipation. He gave up overnight his princely practice at the Bar and changed from one of the richest men in India to one who had hardly anything which he could call his own. With his instinctive sympathy for the poor, he declared that Swaraj must mean a richer and better life for the masses of India and not merely the acquisition of additional rights for some privileged classes. He brought to the Indian national struggle a poet's passion and a lawyer's analytical mind. It was not surprising that his services and his renunciation should win the heart of the people throughout the country. Almost overnight, Mr. C.R. Das, Barrister-at-Law, became Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, the friend and servant of his country and his people.

It is one of the tragedies of Indian politics that Deshbandhu Chittaranjan died in the prime of life. He was hardly fifty-five when death put an end to his struggle and his service. And this

happened at a time when, mainly through his efforts, a change had taken place both in the Indian approach and the British response. Within India, his work had created an atmosphere of understanding and cordiality between the two major communities of the country. No other Indian leader till then had been able to capture so fully the imagination of Muslims and Hindus alike. It seemed likely that under his inspired leadership, united India would place united demands before a British Government that had been shaken by the impact of the First, World War followed by the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation movements.

What the outcome would have been nobody can say, but the manner in which Deshbandhu Das had converted the Congress to his point of view in spite of the initial opposition of many of the outstanding leaders of the day was a measure of his courage and his tenacity. It was also evidence of his resourcefulness and skill in negotiation and a demonstration of his hold upon the mind and heart of the Indian people. With these qualities of Deshbandhu Das and with the support of his friend and colleague, Pandit Motilal Nehru, it is hermissible to hope that he might have found a way of the impasse which then faced the British and the Indian people.

Deshbandhu Das was a practical idealist who knew how to combine what is desirable with what is possible. He was never a slave to slogans and had an uncommon power of separating the essentials from the irrelevant and the peripheral. He know that in a long-drawn-out political struggle, there must be changes in strategy and tactics from time to time. He allowed no false sense of pride to stand in the way of such changes. As a realist, he also knew that when freedom is sought through methods of negotation and compromise, it can come only in gradual stages. He repeatedly declared that it was the task of statesmanship to consolidate every gain and use it as a base for a further advance towards the goal. It is a measure of his sagacity and vision that more than ten years before the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1935, he had clearly foreseen that the next advance on the political front would be the achievement of provincial autonomy and a federal central government.

Political leaders have unprecedented popularity in their days

and overshadow men of equal or even greater distinction in other spheres of life. The intensity of their fame, however, is often matched by its shortlivedness. With the passage of years, political leaders who were pre-eminent in their day fade away, while scientists, writers or artists who had been overshadowed in their lifetime shine with increasing brightness. Many of the giants of the Indian struggle are today almost forgotten names. It is however in the national interest to recognise the services of all of them. A nation that forgets past heroes and honours only those who now stand upon the stage suffers from impoverishment of inspiration and faces the risk of sudden upheavail and change. It would be a sign of political immaturity if the services of the stalwarts who built up the Indian National Congress and gave direction and strength to the Indian national movement are forgotten and the younger generations of today grow up without knowledge of their contribution and regard for their services.

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DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS

HEMENDRANATH DAS GUPTA

SURROUNDINGS AND PARENTAGE

Vikrampur has been for many centuries a centre of learning and culture in Eastern India. In the twelfth century the capital of King Ballal Sen and King Lakshman Sen of Bengal was situated in Vikrampur. It was the home of Dipankar who went to Tibet in the tenth century with the message of the Buddha. In the middle ages this was the seat of Kedar Roy who defied the might of Imperial Delhi for many years. In more recent times it has been the home of some of the leading men of Bengal Jagdish Chandra Bose came from the *pargana* also Chittranjan Das.

Vikrampur, which is now in East Pakistan, is washed by the waters of many rivers and streams. The mighty Padma flows along its western boundaries, and on the eastern side flows the Meghna. The flow of these rivers leads to constant erosion and formation of new land. The rivers have given the area a good climate but they have also compelled the local people to seek their livelihood by struggle against nature. Lord Carmichael who visited Vikrampur 1915 described it in the following terms :

> "Vikrampur seems to resemble in some ways my native land of Scotland, for many of the best of her sons seek employment far beyond her borders and, indeed, like Scotsmen in the British Empire, take a large share in the administration of the affairs of the people, and, like Scotsmen, they are

always proud of the land from which they some and their children are proud of the connection with the home of their forefather."

Telirbag is a village of Vikrampur located at the northern bank of the Padma. Chittaranjan was born in a family of Vaidyas hailing from this village. The Vaidyas are physicians by profession and have been noted for their progressiveness and love of learning. The community has for many years been remarkable for the encouragement it has given to education among all its members. In fact, in women's education the community has always been in the forefront in India.

Chittaranjan was born with the virtues and characteristics of his birthplace and his community. He showed from early life a spirit of adventure, great devotion to causes and a determination to excel. He inherited from his great-grandfather, Chandra Nath Das, the generosity which was such a marked characteristic of his nature.

Chittaranjan's grandfather, Kashishwar Das, was a Government pleader of Barisal and had three sons, Kali Mohan, Durga Mohan and Bhuban Mohan, who were all *vakils* (lawyers) in the Calcutta High Court. The eldest Kali Mohan, rose high in the profession and was a man of remarkable courage. He was also a little short-tempered and often came into conflict with authority. In those days it was rate for a lawyer to challenge a judge, particularly a judge of the High Court Kali Mohan Das was once pulled up by Mr. Justice Louis Jackson while arguing a case. He retorted : "I am surprised, my Lord, that though you have been a District Judge of so many years' experience, I cannot make you understand what even a student of law can very easily follow."

The judge was naturally annoyed and drew up proceedings against him. Many of his friends advised Kali Mohan Das to apologise, but he refused to do so. The matter was referred to the full Bench of the High Court and Sir Barnes Peacock, then Chief Justice, gave a decision in Kali Mohan's favour in the following words, "No doubt Kali Mohan Babu was intemperate in his language but the principle of law he was arguing was right. So no action is called for."

Durga Mohan Das was a great social reformer and an ardent

Brahmo. He refused to give his eldest daughter in marriage to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar as she had not then attained the age of sixteen, the minimum fixed by the Brahmo Samaj for the marriage of girls. He collaborated with Ananda Mohan Bose, Shib Nath Shastri and others in working for the equality of the sexes and the abolition of *purdah*. His three sons also joined the legal profession and became Barristers-at-Law. One of them, Satish Ranjan Das, became the Advocate-General of Bengal and later Law Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Chittaranjan's father, Bhuban Mohan, was both a *vakil* and an attorney of the Calcutta High Court. A man of great culture and wide sympathies, he was generous to a fault. He was fond of poetry, loved music and composed verses and hymns which he used to sing every morning. He was also a good writer with a simple, chaste and direct style As editor of the *Brahmo Public Opinion*, he attained a high position among the journalists of Bengal because of his sincere and forceful writing, Like his brother, Kali Mohan, he also came into conflict with authority on many occasions.

Chittaranjan inherited many of the qualities of his father but perhaps it was his mother who had greater influence on him. She was large-hearted and hospitable and possessed a fine sense of justice. She did not receive high education but had great natural gifts and endowments. She needed them to overcome the difficulties which the family had to face because of her husband's impetuous and generous nature. He was extravagant himself and in addition always willing to incur debts to help others. In the end, he was declared an insolvent and the family was in distress because of the debts and the claims made on it by many dependants. Nistarini Devi shouldered their responsibilities with courage and common sense. Neither adversity nor weath had any effect on her character and she faced both with equanimity. It was natural that Chittaranjan should be deeply devoted to her and ready to face any risk for her sake.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Chittaranjan Das was born in Calcutta on Saturday, the 5th of November 1870. He was the second child in a family of

eight. He had an elder sister, four younger sisters and two brothers.

Early in his life Chittaranjan came in contact with Bipin Chandra Pal, one of the well-known political leaders of India and a renowned orator. Chittaranjan was from his infancy fond of patriotic poems and used to recite them with great fervour. He entered school at the age of nine and passed the Entrance Examination of Calcutta University in 1886. Soon after he joined the Presideney College which has produced some of the most prominent figures of India in the last hundred years. In fact, Presidency College men used to say, 'Anybody who is anybody in public life is somebody from Presidency College,' Among Chittaranjan's contemporaries were a number of men who distinguished themselves in public administration, politics and literature.

Chittaranjan was strong in English but weak in mathematics. He was very fond of Bengali literature and immersed himself in the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterji. He also studied Rabindranath Tagore and was an admirer of Keats, Shelley and Browning. He was a keen debater and became secretary of the Students' Association which was often addressed by Surendra Nath Banerjea who soon became one of the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Das wanted to be introduced as a second language for University examinations and saw the Vice-Chancellor of the University. His plea was not accepted as Vice-Chancellor thought that it might detract from the prestige and importance of Sanskrit.

In 1890 Chittaranjan was sent to London to qualify himself for the Indian Civil Service. Along with him went J.N. Gupta who had been a friend in college and later became a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service.

In London Chittaranjan came in contact with Prof. Carveth Reade who took a great liking for him and taught him philosophy and literature. Chittaranjan sat for the Civil Service examination in 1892 but did not take all the papers because he felt he might not do well. His friend J.N. Gupta entered the service and went to Oxford, but Chittaranjan remained in London.

Prof. Carveth Reade had formed a high opinion of his young pupil and wished to encourage him in every way. He advised him to think out problems on his own and go through textbooks

only after he had formed his own views. This meant hard work, but Professor Reade told him that it would develop in him the power of independent thought and expression.

Chittaranjan took the I.C.S., examination again in 1893 and felt that he had acquitted himself well. He communicated his hopes to his father by cable. Another competitor 'Albion Banerji, wrote to his friends that Chittaranjan was sure to succeed. Ultimately, however, it turned out that instead of fifty as formerly announced, only forty-two persons were to be recruited that year and Chittaranjan was placed forty-third in the list.

It was then said, and many believed it, that Chittaranjan had lost his place in the service because of his political activities. He was from early childhood a patriot and had given evidence of his love of home-made goods. In London, he used a heavy gold chain which attracted the attention of his teachers. When asked why he used such an unfashionable article, Chittaranjan replied that he preferred an inelegant Indian chain to the most fashionable chain manufactured in Britain.

Chittaranjan had also become involved in political activities on behalf of India soon after he sat for the Civil Service Examination for the first time. There was a Parliamentary election in 1892 in which Indian sympathies were with the followers of Gladstone. The political enthusiasm of students had been roused by a series of incidents starting with the agitation against the Ilbert Bill in 1883. Surendra Nath Banerjea was imprisoned the same year and Lord Ripon received a warm and enthusiastic farewell from the Indian people while the British elements were glad to see him go.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1885 in Bombay under the presidentship of Mr. W.C. Bonnerji. The second was held in Calcutta with Dadabhai Naoroji as the president and the third in Madras under Syed Badruddin Tyabji. Intellectual classes responded enthusiastically to the Congress but the British authorities were disturbed and angry Lord Dufferin referred to the members of the Congress as a microscopic minority but all this had only the effect of creating a stronger spirit of nationalism among the youth of the country. In 1889 the Congress held its fifth session in Bombay which was attended by Charles Bradlaugh, a Liberal member of the British Parliament. On his return, Bradlaugh introduced a Bill for reforms

in India, but although it had passed the second reading it could not become an Act because of his serious illness which ultimately ended in his death. Lord Cross, then Secretary of State for India, brought a Bill which was passed as the India Councils Act. 1892. It provided for nominated, not elected. legislatures in spite of the advice of Lord Northbrook, Lord Ripon and Lord Sandley in the House of Lords and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons.

It was only natural that the 1892 election should pay some attention to the Indian question. Some of the opponents of Indian Home Rule made derogatory remarks about Indians in their speeches. This provoked a strong reaction among the Indian students in Britain. Chittaranjan took a leading part in this political campaign and, even though a candidate for the Civil Service, he spoke strongly at Exeter and elsewhere in favour of Indian Reform. His speeches attracted the notice of important Liberal leaders including Gladstone. In the end, the Liberals won the election but Chittaranjan, as already mentioned, was not among the successful candidates for the Civil Service. He felt that he had lost his place in the service because of his political activities and cabled to his father : *Failed. One Place out, Jobbery.*

The family was greatly distressed not only because of his failure but also because they feared that in his dis-appointment he might adopt some desperate course or refuse to return to India. Bhuban Mohan wired to his son that he should study for the Bar and followed up with a letter that the family traditions equipped him for the legal profession. An extract from a letter which Sir Richard Garth, *ex*-Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court wrote to Bhuban Mohan is of interest in this connection :

> "I tried my best, but the fiery speeches of your son, at Oldham have spoiled everything. I could not persuade the fade Office."

Cittaranjan joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1893.

EARLY STRUGGLE AND SUCCESS

Chittaranjan was sworn in as an advocate of the Calcutta

High Court before Mr. Justice Sale in December 1893. Like many other young lawyers, he also had to struggle hard and face many disappointments in his early career. The outlook indeed looked gloomy for him. His father was over head and ears in debt. This was bad enough, but his financial difficulties became even worse when he stood for election to the Calcutta Corporation and was defeated at the polls. In those days barristers used to give themselves airs and many of them considered it *infradig* to travel by tram or on foot. Chittaranjan used to go to the High Court by tram and walk back across the Maidan on foot.

Chittaranjan's father had incurred heavy personal debts. In addition he had incurred obligations on behalf of others because of his generous and impetuous nature. He had stood surety for a person at the request of his clerk. When the man absconded, Bhudan Mohan became liable to pay back a sum of Rs. 30,000. When Chittarajan began to practise, bonds for the repayment of two debts were renewed in the names of both father and son. Some creditors went to court for realisation of their debts. Bhuban Mohan and Chittaranjan were declared insolvent and their estate and effects vested in the Official Assignee on the 16th of June 1896.

For four year or more, Chittaranjan had to struggle hard for bare survival. His father had practically retired from the profession and Chittaranjan had to support a large family while he was yet a declared insolvent. These difficulties did not discourage him, however, but made him struggle harder to build up his career.

Chittaranjan had, of course, a great advantage in the traditions and connection of his family. His grandfather Kashishwar had been a Government pleader. His uncles were also well-known lawyers. The family has produced three High Court Judges and one of them, Sudhi Ranjan Das, was till recently Chief Justice of India Chittaranjan's own younger brother, P.R. Das, is one of our leading lawyers.

Civil practice on the Original side has attracted some of the best legal brains in the Calcutta High Court but building a practice on the Original side usually takes a long time, Situated as he was, Chittaranjan could not wait and had to depend on criminal practice which often took him away to the *mofussil* courts. He was so hard up that he often accepted fees which were much lower

than was customary for barristers of his standing. The Maharaja of Natore, who was an intimate friend of Chittaranjan, relates an incident which gives up a picture of Chittaranjan's condition at the time. Once when he hand gone to Chittaranjan's house he found him dejected and sitting all by himself. When he met Chittaranjan again after some time, he found that he was in a better mood as he had received a case which would bring him a fee of Rs. 300. The Maharaja was surprised at the smallness of the figure but Chittaranjan had accepted it gratefully as there was no money in the house even for the bare necessaries of life.

Soon Chittaranjan's reputation began to rise. He proved specially successful in cross-examining witnesses and turning the evidence to his client's advantage. He was grearly helped by his friend Sarat Chandra Sen who was a successful *vakil* at the Alipore Criminal court. As Chittaranjan's reputation came to be recognised, he began to concentrate on practice in the city. This also gave him opportunity to turn his attention to the Original side and he slowly but steadily built up a reputation in civil cases.

The year 1907 marked a turning point in Chittaranjan's career as a lawyer. He had by this time established himself as a successful lawyer in both civil and criminal law. He now emerged as a great patriot and defender of national workers. Brahma Bandhob Upadhyaya was accused of sedition before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta. Chittaranjan defended him as well as Bipin Chandra Pal.

A case which attracted still greater attention was the famous Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case in which one of the accused was Shri Aurobindo Ghose who later became famous as the seer and philosopher of Pondicherry. This case deserves a somewhat more detailed discussion as it has become a part of the story of the Indian national struggle.

The Chief Presidency Magistrute of Calcutta. Mr. Kingsford, had become very unpopular because of the severity with which he punished persons accused of political offences. He had passed severe sentences on the editors and printers of nationalist newspapers. In one case he sentenced a young boy of fifteen to whipping, which caused indignation even among the British. Lord Morley, who was then Secretary of State for India, was shocked

by some of his judgments and wrote to Lord Minto the Viceroy, in the following terms :

> "I must confess to you that I am watching with the deepest concern and dismay the thundering sentences that are now being passed for sedition, etc. We must keep order, but excess of severity is not the path to order. On the contrary it lends to the path of the bomb."

The leaders of the revolutionary movement in Bengal decided that Mr. Kingsford must be made to pay for his actions with his life. That would also serve a warning to other officers. A bomb was sent to him by post. He did not open the parcel and was providentially saved. A second attempt was made on his life after he was transferred from Calcutta and became the District Judge of Muzuffarpur. Two young men, Khudiram Bose and Profulla Chaki, were sent to do away with him, but the bomb they hurled killed two innocent women instead. The murder of Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy of Muzaffarpur shocked public opinion and there was great indignation among all sections of the people. Khudiram was arrested on the 1st of May 1908 at the Wani railway station. Profulla Chaki was was also captured at Mokama railway station, but he shot himself with his own revolver. Khudiram was enventually tried and sentenced to death by hanging.

The Government decided that the conspiracy behind these murders must be exposed. There was a search at 32 Muraripukur Road and twenty-six members of the Jugantar Party a revolutionary group, were arrested. Later Shri Aurobindo Ghose was taken into custody from his residence at 48 Grey Street. A preliminary enquiry was held on the 19th of August 1908 and the accused were charged with sedition and conspiracy. It was alleged that after the partition of Bengal in 1905 the accused had preached sedition through the Bengali weekly *Jugantar* and had conspired together to wage war against His Majesty's Government. It was also said that they sought to overawe the authorities by violence and had collected arms and made extensive preparations for manufacturing bombs. Among the other charges were that they had attempted to wreck the train by which the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andrew Fraser, was travelling, had thrown a bomb

into the residence of the Mayor of Chandernagore, fired at Mr. Allen, the District Magistrate of Dacca, and sent Khudiram and Profulla to murder Mr. Kingsford.

One of the accused, Narendra Nath Goswami turned approver during the enquiry and eight more persons were arrested as a result of his disclosures. Goswami however, did not live to enjoy the benefit of his betrayal. Two of the accused Kanai Lal Dutta and Satyendra Nath Bose, shot him dead in the Presidency Jail hospital. They were tried for murder and sentenced to death. All this evidence was put together and the surviving accused were committee to sessions.

The regular trial began on the 19th of October 1908 before Mr. Beachcroft, Additional Sessions Judge of Alipore. The prosecution was conducted by the famous lawyer, Mr. Eardley Norton, while Shri Aurobindo was at first defended by Messrs. B. Chakraborty and K. N. Chowdhury. Shri Aurobindo had voluntarily embraced poverty, and public subscriptions were raised for his defence. The amount, however, was soon spent and a time came when there was no one except Chittaranjan left to defend him. After his acquittal Shri Aurobindo expressed his gratitude to Chittaranjan in the following terms :

> "He came unexpectedly, a friend of mine. . . . You have all heard the name of the main who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice. Who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me—Srijut Chittaranjan Das. When I saw him I was satisfied."

Chittaranjan worked hard in defence of his client. He devoted all his thought and energy to the case and studied up all the available case law to strengthen his brief. For ten months. Chittaranjan devoted himself exclusively to Aurobindo's case. Not only did he do so without any fee but he had to sell his carriage and horse and borrow money on personal bonds. His earnings came to an end while his expenses continued as before. When the case was over, he was in debt to the extent of about Rs. 50,000.

Chittaranjan worked heart and soul to defend Aurobindo but even then his anxiety for his client would not allow him to compromise his dignity. Once when Chittaranjan was arguing about

the admissibility of some evidence, the judge dismissed his argument as nonsense. Das immediately retorted, "It is a pity that you are on the Bench and I am at the Bar. If you had said this somewhere else, I could have given you the proper reply."

The judge realised that he had erred, and the matter came to an end with his apology.

Though there were a number of accused in the conspiracy case, the Government's real target was Shri Aurobindo. Mr. Beachcroft himself observed in his judgment :

> "Aurobindo was the accused whom more than any other the prosecution were anxious to have convicted, and, but for his presence in the dock, there was no doubt the case would have been finished long ago."

The trial continued for 126 days. Over two hundred witnesses were examined; 4,000 paper exhabits and about 500 material exhibits in the form of bombs and explosives were filed. Chittaranjan's concluding address continued for nine days, and the peroration with which he ended will rank among the classics of legal addresses.

An item of evidence produced by the prosecution was a letter which Aurobindo had written to his wife in 1905. In this letter Aurobindo said :

> "At present I have no work of my own. I am always busy with His work. My mind has undergone a radical change. I do whatever I am commanded by Him to do. I have no will of my own. God will also be kind to you and He will show you the true path. You are my wife (Sahadharmini) : won't you help me in my mission.
> Divine energy (Brahmatej) is necessary for the salvation of the country.

The prosecution interpreted this letter as evidence of conspiracy and argued that Aurobindo was asking his wife also to join him in the work. Chittaranjan, on the other hand, regarded it as a statement of deep spiritual faith and submitted that it was the language of total self-effacement and resignation. He pointed out that the cardinal doctrine of Hinduism was to regard oneself as a tool in God's hand. It is Divine Will that acts through man. The

religious spirit of the letter is found even in the use of the word *Sahadharmini*. The term means one who is a fellow worker in the attainment of the religious ideal. Similarly, the use of the word *Brahmatej* or divine energy indicates that human arms are insignificant in comparison with divine force.

Another item of evidence advanced by the prosecution was that Aurobindo had attended a meeting held on the 28th of March to honour Bipin Chandra Pal on his release from jail. Chittaranjan pointed out that Bipin Chandra Pal had suffered imprisonment for the sake of Aurobindo. It was natural, therefore, that Aurobindo should attend the meeting out of a sense of obligation. He maintained that this could not be construed as an act of conspiracy.

Das dealt in a similar manner with the other arguments put forward by the prosecution. He displayed great legal acumen in arguing that confessions of other accused could not be admitted as evidence against Aurobindo. The approver's evidence was expunged and Das's masterly analysis of the facts of the case convinced the assessors. The words with which Das concluded his speech will always have an appeal for those who love freedom and human dignity.

Das first interpreted Aurobindo's thought in the following manner :

> "If it is suggested that I preached the ideal of freedom for my country and that this is against the law. I plead guilty to the charge. If that is the law here, I say I have done that and I request you to convict me, but do not impute to me crimes I am not guilty of, deeds against which my whole nature revolts and which, having regard to my mental capacity, is something which could never have been perpetrated by me. If it is an offence to preach the ideal of freedom. I admit having done it. I have never disputed it. It is for this that I have given up all the prospects of my life. It is for this that I came to Calcutta, to live for it and to labour for it. It has been the one thought of my waking hours, the dream of my sleep. If that is my offence, there is no necessity of bringing witnesses into the box to depose different things in connection with that. Here am I and I admit it. If that is my fault, you can chain me, imprison me, but you will never get out of me a denial of

that charge. I, however, venture to submit that it is nooffence in the eyes of the law to preach the deal of freedom. With regard to the crimes with which I have been charged, I submit there is no evidence on the record and it is absolutely inconsistent with everything that I thought, that I wrote and with every tendency of my mind discovered in the evidence."

Das then made the following submission to the Court :

"My appeal to you, therefore, is that a man like this, who is being charged with the offence with which he has been charged, stands not only before the Bar of this Court, but before the Bar of the High Court of history. My appeal to you is this : that long after this controversy will be hushed in silence. long after this turmoil, this agitation, will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism, and a lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man is not only standing before the Bar of this Court but before the Bar of the High Court of history.

The time has come for you, Sir, to consider your judgment and for you gentlemen (addressing the assessors) to consider your verdict. I appeal to you, Sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English Bench that form the most glorious chapter of English history, I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousands of principles of law that have emanated from the English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience but the respect of all those in the cases in which they had administered the law I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English history and let it not be said that an English Judge forgets to establish justice.

"To you gentlemen I appeal in the name of the very ideal which Aurobindo preached and in the name of the traditions of our country. Let it not be said that two of his countrymen were overcome by passions and prejudices and yielded to the clamour of the moment."

The assessors gave their opinion in favour of Aurobindo and on the 6th of May 1909 Mr. Beachcroft delivered his judgment in which he accepted the assessors' view and acquitted Shri Aurobindo Ghose. He, however, sentenced Aurobindo's brother, Barindra Kumar Ghose, and another accused, Ullaskar Dutta, to death. There was an appeal against this judgment before the Chief Justice, Sir Lawrence Jenkins, and Mr. Justice Carnduff. Das had again to take up the case. For 48 days he pleaded for his clients with great skill and persuasiveness.

The ground on which Das argued his case may be briefly mentioned as an example of his wide knowledge of law and great forensic ability. Barindra Kumar and Ullaskar had been charged with the offences under Sections 121, 121A, 122 and 123 of the Indian Penal Code. For prosecution under these sections it is absolutely necessary to have the sanction of the Government under Section 196 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Complaints under these sections can be made only on the basis of that sanction. Das pointed out that Government sanction for prosecution had been asked for offences under Sections 121A, 122 and 123 of the Indian Penal Code but not under Section 121. There was thus no sanction for prosecution under this section nor could there be any valid complaint in the circumstances. Death is the extreme penality under Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code but since there was no regular sanction for the charge under this section, Barindra and Ullaskar must be acquitted of offence under that section.

The judges accepted the cogency of Das's argument and dropped the charge under Section 121. Barindra and Ullaskar were thus saved from the gallows and convicted under Section 121A of the Indian Penal Code. Their sentences were accordingly reduced from death to transportation for life.

The Chief Justice was greatly impressed by Das's presentation of the case and his masterly handling of the intricate and voluminous evidence. He placed on record his appreciation in the following words incorporated in his judgment : "I desire in particular to place on record my high appreciation of the manner in which the case was presented to the court by their leading advocate, Mr. C.R. Das." With this case, Das came to the forefront in the Calcutta Bar. His reputation as a patriot and a lawyer spread throughout the country. Many in fact began to

look upon him as perhaps the best advocate in the whole of India.

If the Alipore Bomb Case established his reputation as one of the greatest lawyers on the criminal side, the famous Dumraon Case proved that Das was equally eminent as a practitioner of civil law. When he took up the case it was regarded as a lost cause, but Das was able to achieve victory for his client by hard work and sheer brilliance.

The facts of the case may be briefly stated :

The Maharaja of Dumraon, Sir Radhaprosad Sinha, died without any male issue. His first daughter died shortly after marriage to the Raja of Mandar without any issue. Sir Radhaprosad's second daughter was married to the Raja of Rewa. In March 1889 the Maharaja, by a registered document, granted his wife the power of adopting a boy after the Maharaja's death from the Ujjaini family of Dumraon, Buxar or Jagadishpur. The document was registered in Calcutta. In 1890, when the Maharaja made his will, he confirmed the power of adoption in that will. In 1894 the Maharaja died and Maharani Beniprosad Koeri, on the 12th of December 1907, just a day before her beath, adopted Jang Bahadur Singh, the son of Joyprosad Sinha of Jagadishpur. He was the heir apparent to the Dumraon *gadi* and was named Maharaj Kumar Srinibash Prosad Sinha. After the death of the Maharani, the estate came under the management of the Court of Wards.

Babu Keshoprosad Sinha, next agnate of Maharaja of Dumraon, had somehow or other incurred the displeasure of the Maharani. The Maharani had all along wished to give the estate to her second daughter, the Rani of Rewa. But the Maharaja had not liked the idea that his ancestral property should thus be transferred to an altogether different line. Desiring to adopt the nearest agnate, Keshoprosad, he had made a proposal to Keshoprosad's father. Babu Rajeshwari Prasad, to this effect. But Rajeshwari Prasad did not agree to the Maharaja's proposal. After that Kishoriprosad could not even get permission to see the Maharani who, being prostrate with serious illness, adopted. Jang Bahadur with the help of Manager Sheosaran Lal, Muntajin Lachhmiprosad and her son-in-law, the Raja of Mandar. After her death, Babu Kishoriprosad filed a suit for setting

aside the adoption as lilegal and void and claimed Rajgarh as his due.

Keshoprosad had consulted eminent lawyers who, however, considered has case a hopeless one. He then engaged Das as his counsel. Against him were engaged Mr. Garth, a famous barrister of Calcutta, and Mr. Hasan Imam of Patna. Das was engaged at a fee of Rs. 10,000 per month with a promise that if he won the case he would be given property which would fetch Rs. 50,000 a year. Das won the case and fulfilled his part of the contract, but his client did not keep his promise.

Das based his argument on the fact that adoption could not oust the claim of an hier who enjoyed legal rights according to time-honoured custom. The right that had vested in Keshoprosad after the Maharaja's death in terms of Mitakshara Law could not be divested by a later adoption. The judge accepted Das's argument and held that the adoption was invalid and Keshoprosad was the leagal heir to the estate.

There was an appeal against the judgment which was heard by a Special Bench of the Calcutta High Court consisting of the Chief Justice, Sir Lawrence Jenkine, and Justices Ashutosh Mookerjee and Sir John Woodroffe. There was a compromise in terms of which the judgment of the lower court was upheld, but it was agreed that Srinibash would be given a property with an annual income of Rs. 50,000.

There was a second Dumraon Case in 1914 when the Rani of Rewa brought a suit against the new Maharaja. Maharaja Keshoprosad did not this time engage Das but in the end he had to seek his help for arriving at a compromise by which the Rani of Rewa gave up her claim in exchange for a property with an income of Rs. 48,000 a year.

There was a third Dumraon Case, between 1917 and 1920, when Das again came to Maheraja Keshoprasad's rescue. Some property had beed purchased in Burma by the Dewan of the Maharaja and he, the Dewan, claimed that this had been given to him as a gift. Das's cross-examination turned on the interpretation of a Persian word which could be read as *anjani* or *ayamat* Das held that the correct reading was *anjani* and meant that the Maharaja had given the money to the Dewan for purchasing the property on behalf of the State. The judge was impressed by Das's argument and accepted his contention that the Maharaja

had advanced the money not as a reward to the Dewan but on behalf of the State.

There was an appeal against this judgment, which came up before the Patna High Court in 1924. Das was approached but as he had in the meantime decided to give up his practice, he did not accept the brief.

It was in political cases, however, that Das was seen at his best as a lawyer. In the Dacca Conspiracy Case of 1910 Das defended Pulin Behari Das, leader of the Anusilan Samity, and his colleagues. The Anusilan Samity was formed in 1905 after the partition of Bengal and it was alleged that it was a secret organisation for overthrowing the British Government by unlawful means. Das challenged not only the jurisdiction of the court and the legality of the whole proceedings but also argued that the Anusilan Samity was intended to develop the mental moral and spiritual qualities of its members. In spite of Das's able advocacy, three of the accused were sentenced to transportation for life and another 33 to different terms of imprisonment. In his appeal to the Calcutta High Court, Das was able to get the sentences substantially reduced. The sentences of transportation for life were changed to six years' rigorous imprisonment and the conviction of only eleven people was upheld.

Shortly after this, Das took up the defence of the accused in the Delhi Conspiracy case. This was another political trial which attracted wide notice throughout India. The Government had charged fourteen persons with conspiracy and overt acts for the overthrow of the Government culminating in the attempt on the life of Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, in 1912. After protracted enquiry the case was committed to a Court of Sessions presided over by Mr. Harrison I.C.S., Sessions Judge of Delhi. The prosecution was conducted by Sir John Alston. Advocate-General of U.P. The local lawyers for defence proved no match for him. Some of them came to Calcutta and requested Das to take up the defence. Das was at that time heavily engaged in Calcutta and found that event if he went to Delhi for two days, he would suffer a loss of at least Rs. 6,000. At the same time he felt that the young men implicated in the case should be properly defended. He finally decided to take up the case though it meant heavy financial loss to him.

Das appeared in the court at Delhi in May 1914 and argued

that the prosecution's case lacked in legal validity and factual evidence. The judge conceded that there was force in Das's contention, but this was challenged by Sir John who at one stage characterised one of Das's observations as untrue. Das protested in such strong language that the judge was taken aback and asked him to apologise to Sir John. Das insisted that there was no occasion for apology and he was not prepared to offer one, In the end Das won his point and the judge who till then had been somewhat harsh on the defence lawyers, changed his attitude and treated prosecution and defence in exactly the same way. The local lawyers of Delhi were delighted and felt greatly encouraged in their conduct of the case.

Another well-known political case in which Das was able to save five young men convicted of political crime is popularly known as the Alipore Trunk Murder Case of 1918. The prosecution story was that five young revolutionaries had murdered one of their fellow members who was suspected of being a spy. The body was then packed in a trunk and sent by railway parcel. It began to decompose within a day or two, and nobody appeared to take delivery. Das was engaed on behalf of one of the accused, a young boy named Panchanan, who was heir to one of the biggest estates in Calcutta. In fact, however, Das defended all the accused and after 28 days' sittings the accused were all acquitted. The Advocate-General of Bengal complimented Das on his handling of the case.

A somewhat unusual case was Kutubdia Detenu Case in which seventeen internes under the Defence of India Act were prosecuted for leaving their place of detention' and going to Chittagong. Das took up the defence of these *detenus* without any fees and in addition spent his own money to asist them. He spent almost a fortnight in Chittagong in conducting the case and pointed out that the *detenus* had not absconded but gone to the District Magistrate to place before him their legitimate grievances regarding food, drinking water, accommodation and allownce. As such, they could not be charged with any intention to defy the law or any legal order. In spite of Das's eloquent plea the judge found the accused guilty. He sentenced them, however, to only two months' imprisonment.

This brief account of Das's success as a lawyer may be concluded with a reference to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* Contempt

Case of 1918. A Bench of the Calcutta High Court had held that the Calcutta Improvement Trust could not acquire private land at will. At the same time, another judge of the High Court, in an analogous case on the Original side, had held that the Improvement Trust had the power of such acquisition. In order to reconcile these two conflicting decisions a Special Bench of the High Court was formed with the Chief Justice, Sir Lancelot Sanderson, Justice Sir John Woodroffe and Mr. Justice Chitty. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* a well-known daily of Calcutta, commented editorially on the constitution of this Special Bench and suggested that an Indian judge owning land should have been taken in place of Mr. Chitty. The Chief Justice issued notice to show cause why the *Patrika* should not be prosecuted for contempt of court. The matter came up for hearing before a full Bench of the High Court.

The Amrita Bazar Patrika engaged almost all the luminaries of the Calcutta Bar including Messrs. Jackson, Norton, Chakraborty and Chittaranjan Das. The case was naturally opened by Mr. Jackson, but from the beginning there was altercation between him and the Chief Justice. Mr. Norton then tried to argue the case. He also found the judges unsympathetic. Nor did Mr. Byomkesh Chakraborty face better and it seemed that the case was going against the accused.

Das then rose to plead for his clients and approached the question from an entirely new angle. He submitted that there had been no intention to cast any reflection on the High Court. All that the writer of the articles had done was to raise various points of controversy and answer them in his own way. Some of his expressions were unfortunate, but his real intention seemed to be that matter should be heard be a full Bench. As such, the article might be improper, but it did not constitute contempt of the court. Das further drew a distinction between civil and criminal liability and placed his case with such great analytical skill aud erudition that the judges were convinced and decided in favour of the *Patrika.*

After Das's death, both the Bench and the Bar paid eloquent testimony to his skill, courage and integrity as a lawyer. It was pointed out that the secret of his success lay in the extreme care with which he hunted up all references and weighed all facts. Statements by witnesses, as well as documents and circumstantial

evidence were analysed with the utmost care and ingenuity. In addition he had an iron will and never yielded ground either to judges or to adversaries. There was not the sligtest trace of sycophancy in his pleading nor the faintest suggestion of fear in the presence of authority. He stood up like a man and spoke with a sincerity and conviction which influenced even judges who were initially hostile.

AS A POET AND LITERARY FIGURE

It was natural that a man of strong feeling and imagination like Das should be attracted to literature and poetry. From his early childhood he was deeply influenced by the Vaishnav poets. Their sincerity and utter simplicity made a profonnd impression on him which lasted throughout his life. This influence was reinforced by the life and precepts of Shri Chaitanya. Born in a Brahmo family in which the major emphasis was on rationalism, Das perhaps experienced the emotional currents of the Vaishnavism of Bengal the more strongly. He was also influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who, in spite of his strong intellectual bias showed a strain of devotion and mysticism in his writings.

The first book of poems published by Das was *Malaneha*, a book of lyics. This consists of devotional poems and lyrics of Nature. There are also poems which indicate Das's deep sympathy with the underdog in society. A poem entitled. "The Harlot" raised a storm of protest in the Brahmo Samaj and even led to some trouble at the time of his marriage. Das, however, did not allow this opposition to impair his deep sympathy with human suffering. He would not submit to the dogmas of any society and believed that faith and devotion were the cardinal virtues of man.

Das's poetic work includes other books like *Mala*, *Sagar-Sangeet*, *Antaryami* and *Kishore Kishori*. These attracted wide appreciation and the great oriental scholar. Mr. John Alexander Chapman, spoke highly of them. Mr. Chapman even translated some of Das's poems, while Shri Aurobindo Ghose translated many others. In discussing one of Das's poems, Mr. Chapman observed : "In Deshbandhu's mind singing and living were one. Song is life and life is song. Certainly song is as old as human life and is the proof of the divinity of mankind. . . . . If a man lived as he should, he would sing as he should. The imperfection

of song is the imperfection of life."

Mala was published in 1904 and is marked by a deeper religious spirit. Its peoms revealed Das's growing concern with religious faith and belief in the unknown and unknowable.

If *Malancha* introduced Das as a poet, *Sagar Sangeet* made him famous. It was written in November 1910 when he was returning from England by sea. The poems are remarkable not only for the novelty of subject but their beauty of thought and literary grace. In feeling and movement *Sagar Sangeet* is deep like the sea and a happy fusion of devotion and thought.

This growing yearning for God is seen even more clearly in his *Antaryami* and *Kishore Kishore*. *Antaryami* reveals a calm and peaceful spirit which remains unruffled in the midst of difficulties as a result of prayer and meditation. The same concern with personal life is seen in *Kishore Kishori* where Das sings of the eternal love of Krishna and Radha.

If Das's deep personal faith found expression in his lyric poems, his concern with social and political affairs led him to the service of Bengali literature through journals. He brought out in 1914 the famous Bengali monthly *Narayana*. Apart from essays, stories, poems and songs by the editor, the journal published contributions from renowned writers like Brojendra Nath Seal, Bipin Chandra Pal, Har Prasad Shastri, Rakhaldas Banerjee, Suresh Chandra Samajpati and many others. It was, however, a little unfortunate that *Narayana* came to be regarded as a kind of counter blast to *Sabujpatra*. This latter journal was edited by Pramatha Choudhury under the pen name Birbal. Conducted under the inspiration of Rabindranath Tagore, it reflected his mood at the time which was influenced to a large extent by Ibsen. Some of the stories of Tagore like "Bostami" and "The Wife's Letter" provoked the more conservative elements in Bengal. *Narayana* was intended to be a reply to these new ideas propagated through literature. In one of his essays, Das wrote as follows :

> "Rabindranath has imported many things from the West That no doubt has added to the rich variery and wealth of Bengali literatures but has not helped to develop and preserve Bengal's individual culture and its national genius. Under no circumstances should we suffer ourselves to be led by the

glamour of the West."

All critics would not perhaps accept this criticism of Tagore but there is no denying that the publication of serious and thoughtful writings and devotional songs based on India's own traditions helped to check the forces of modernism which were sweeping many of the younger writers off their feet. That Das himself had felt the impact of these forces is seen from his poems like "The Harlot" or stories like "Dalim" and "Pranapratishtha" which show how women who have sinned against society can be redeemed through love, and devotion.

It would be wrong, however, to think that Das was always living on the high peaks of feeling and devotion. His lyric poems rise to great heights, but his stories and serious essays show a keen intellectual perception. Humour was an equally strong element in his character and revealed itself in both his speech and writing. Indians are credited with being always serious but Das had an inexhaustible stock of genial humour. Even the dullest company was enlivened by his light-hearted sallies. His humour often stood him in good stead in his professional career.

After he became Mayor of Calcutta, one of the Councillors wanted begging to be stopped in the city. Das promptly remarked that then the Mayor would be the first accused as he was the greatest beggar in Calcutta at the time.

On another occasion the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation admited a table in the Mayor's room and remarked that it was a thing of beauty. Das retorted : "But to me it is not a joy for ever."

It is difficult to give a full idea of Das's humour in an English book, as much of it depended on Bengali quips, puns and allusions. Once a senior pleader, Kishoripati Ray, was brought to jail in a small litter as he could not walk. When Das asked him about his health, Mr. Ray said that he had come in a chariot as he could not walk. Das retorted that that was how Kishoripati (Vishnu) always came.

During elections to the Bengal Legislative Council, Das was supporting Satkari Roy against his own cousin, Mr. S.R. Das. A gentleman whose name was Surya (Sun) came and reported to Das that another friend Bidhu (Moon) was working

for Mr. S.R. Das. Das retorted that if Bidhu could do something for S.R. Das, Surya should do ten times as much for Satkari.

Das used to argue that the Vaidyas—the community to which he belonged—were in fact Brahmins. Mrs. Das once asked what evidence there was for his statement. Das replied at once : "The evidence is that I have married a Brahmin." Every one burst out laughing.

During the Gaya session of the Congress, Das and some of his friends were talking among themselves informally. An outsider who was present asked in impatience, "Sir, when will the proceedings begin ?" Das retorted, "As soon as you stop."

Once a gentleman remarked that if there was no difference between the Independents and the Swarajists he could not understand why the Independents did not join the Swaraj Party. Das replied, "They will then loss their independent title !"

EARLY POLITICAL LIFE

We have already seen that Das was interested in politics even during his student days. In fact he and his friends felt that it was on account of his political activities that he had not been appointed to the Indian Civil Service. In his professional life also politics played an important part and some of his outstanding successes as a lawyer were in political cases. Patriotism was the guiding force also of his literary work. Almost everything he wrote was imbued with his deep love for the country and respect for its traditions. It was this sense of social obligation which led him to start his journal *Narayana*. Thus, he was a nationalist first and a lawyer and literateur afterwards.

When Das came to the arena of politics, he brought with him all the qualities that had marked him out as a lawyer and a literary figure. He had great powers of eloquence and persuasiveness. His legal training enabled him to analyse the different aspects of a question and also gave him a strong sense of realism. This capacity for objective analysis was combined with the fervour and passion of a poet. Naturally,

from his earliest days in politics he fought for Swaraj for the masses and not for a handful of upper-class men and women. His country recognised his great qualities and gave him the loving title of Deshbandhu or "Friend of the Country."

The beginnings of modern Indian politics may be traced to the first meeting of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in 1885. At that stage the Congress was mainly a petitioning body. The partition of Bengal shook it out of its mildness. The resolutions and the language in the Congress sessions became more forceful but it would be a mistake to regard the Congress at this stage as a revolutionary body in any sense.

In 1905, however, new forces rose within the Congress. Bipin Chandra Pal became the spokesman of the younger generation and his paper *New India* voiced their aspirations. Das was closely associated with Bipin Chandra Pal and opposed the mendicant policy of the Moderates who still controlled the Indian National Congress. Bipin Chandra Pal, in speaking of this time, wrote as follows :

> "At this time, another movement was slowly gathering strength in our politics. The *New India* was started in 1901. From its very birth, Chittaranjan was very intimately associated with it. When the original proprietors found it difficult to bear its burdens, Chittaranjan came forward to save it. A joint stock company was formed to finance it and Chittaranjan, though unable to join the Board of Directors of the Company owing to his insolvency, induced his friends to put their names and money into this enterprise. In 1905, with the birth of our new nationalist movement, our old intimacy and comradeship grew more intimate still. For nearly twently years Chittaranjan and myself were really co-partners in the service of our common motherland. While I worked, he found the means of my subsistence. And he bore my burdens with a deep and abiding sense of sacred duty which made it possible for me freely to accept his help without hesitancy of humiliation."

A Swadeshi Mandali was formed in Das's house in 1904. It

was a group of chosen friends whose object was to propagate ideas of self-help and Swadeshi. In a speech delivered at Darjeeling on the 16th of October 1905, Das declared as follows :

> "The chief reason for which this Swadeshi movement is desirable appears to me that it provides the first step towards the path of self-reliance of the Bengali nation. For the same reason it is my firm conviction that our national progress depends upon the success of movement. This histories of the world have proved that no nation can help another. As every person has to work put his future through his personal exertion, so is the case with a nation. It has to depend upon its own strength for achieving freedom. But if you depend on another nation, even in thousands of years you will not find the path of real freedom."

Das spoke mainly in terms of Bengal in this meeting but his was a broad nationalism which included the whole of India. He had even begun to think in terms of an Asian federation. He was influenced in this by Okakura, a famous poet of Japan, and also by Sister Nivediat. He was greatly moved by Okakura's book *Ideals of the East*. Sister Nivedita had written in the Introduction, "Asia is one, the Himalayas divide only to bring closer the two mighty civilisations of the East—one of India and the other of China."

Das and his friends began to feel at this time the need of a national system of education. Certain developments gave further strength to their desire to start a national college. In October 1905, a circular was issued by the Government of Bengal which prohibited students from taking part in politics. Students were fined and sometimes even flogged by the headmasters of some schools at the instance of the Inspectorate. Das learnt that Shri Subodh Mullick, a rich philanthropist of Calcutta, was willing to make a hand-some donation in case a national college was started. Das immediately took up the project of a national university and secured from Shri Mullick the promise of the hundred thousand rupees. The project was announced on the 9th of November 1905.

This was the beginning of the National Council of Education

which later developed into the Jadavpur Engineering College. It is today a statutory university with a special bias towards technology. Das asked Aurobindo Ghose to give up his post as vice-principal of the Gaekwar College of Baroda and come to Calcutta for serving the nation. When the National Council of Education was formed Aurobindo Ghose joined it as its first principal.

The year 1906 was another important date in Das's political career. At the Bengal Provincial Conference which was held at Barisal with Mr. A Rasul as its president, Das drafted the main resolution. He advocated the policy of self reliance in place of petitions and appeals which till then had been the chief instruments of political activity. The Conference, however, could not complete its deliberations peacefully as the open sessions were broken up by the police. Volunteers and students were beaten up for shouting the slogan *Bande Mataram*. Surendra Nath Banerjea was atrested and convicted. Even the Moderate leaders were shocked and they predicted that this was the beginning of the end of British rule in India. In June 1906, within six weeks of the break-up of the conference, Lokamanya Tilak come to Calcutta and organised the Shivaji Festival. Tilak's message on the occasion. "Swaraj is my birthright", became the slogan of Indian nationalism. He and other Maharashtrian leaders were Das's guests during the Calcutta session of the Congress, and their association gave a further impetus to the growth of the nationalist party.

The Congress came under the control of the Moderates after its session at Surat in 1907 was disrupted. Das remained aloof from active politics but his services as a lawyer in important political cases enabled him to maintain his contacts. In April 1917, he was invited to preside over the Bengal Provincial Conference in Calcutta. In proposing his name, Surendra Nath Banerjea declared that he would soon be one of the most trusted and beloved leaders of India.

Since this was Das's first major political pronouncement, it would be proper to give some quotations to indicate the trend of his political thought at the time :

> "I feel a peculiar pride in calling myself a Bengali. The Bengalis have a mission of their own. They have their own

valour, culture, literature, religion and practices. They have a history and a future before them. And so I can declare with confidence that he knows not my Bengal who describes the Bengalis as wanting in discipline . . . . . .

"We seldom think of Bengal. We have lost our touch with the general mass, hence all our political agitations have become fruitless and empty. The country does not consist only of the educated class but of all classes, sects, and creeds . . . ."

Das blamed our political assemblies for their failure to call on the common people, the tillers of the soil, to join them. It was purely a *bourgeois* policy and not based on an all-embracing democratic principle. Our political agitation was unreal as it was divorced from intimate touch with the people who formed the backbone of the country. In has address, he showed how, with the progress of British rule, we had imitated some of the worst European vices, sacrificed our former life of simplicity and vigour and in its place adopted love of ease and luxury. In his opinion it was Bankim Chandra "to whom the true nature of the Mother was first revealed. It was he whose eyes were first blessed by the blessed vision of the motherland."

Das declared :

"I have found out the true soul of Bengal. I have learnt to appreciate the real history of Bengal. The images of Buddha of the Buddhists, of Siva of the Saivas, of Sakti of the Saktas and of the devotional love of the Vaishnavas rise up before my vision. I think of the immortal songs of Vidyapati and Chandidas and feel myself glorified by the glorious life of Shri Chaitanya. The songs of Jnanadas, Govindadas and Lochan Das vibrate in my heart's core. The devotional songs of Ramprosad Sen melt my heart.

"We then saw our mother and Bankim's song touched our heart though the ears. I can appreciate the message of Shri Ramakrishna and Keshab Chandra. I feel inspired by the words of Vivekananda. I can realise that a Bengali whether a Hindu, a Moslem or a Christian is after all a Bengali. He has an individuality of his own. He has his own culture, and if he means to realise himself he will have

to be a true Bengali.

"The Bengalis have a place to call as their own under the sun. They have their own duties and mission in this world. A Bengali must be a Bengali at heart. The Bengalis have some distinction from the rest of the creation, a special aspect of the Eternal manifestation of the Creator's will."

He not only analysed the present condition of the country and the causes of economic and political decay but also offered a constructive plan for the reorganisation of villages which form the backbone of India :

(i) We must reconstruct our villages and take all steps for the rehabilitation of the people.
(ii) We must give sufficient food to cultivators to enable them to labour all round the year.
(iii) We must remove water scarcity, dig new tanks, clear old ones.
(iv) We must clear jungles.
(v) We must establ'sh Panchayats aad co-operative credit societies enabling the cultivators to get loans at low interest, and start cottage industries.

One may sum up Das's message as a call to self-reliance. He was no enemy of the West but he felt that unless India could meet the West as an equal, there could be no permanent friendship between them. He was not against such friendship between Britain and India provided each developed itself to its highest capacity. He spoke of the old days of India when her granaries were full and the people had enough to eat. There was joy in village life and the peasant returned home after his toil with a smile on his lips. He held that our weakness was due to disunity. He condemned the blind imitation of the West in manners, customs and habits of speech, dress, food and drink.

In his book *The Heart of Aryavarta*, Lord Ronaldshay has referred to Das's speech in the following terms :

"Mr. Das spoke indeed with all the ardour of a missionary. He smote in pieces the golden calf which he set up as symbolical of the ideals of Europe and with the fervour of a seer he

promised the way to a promised land."

In 1916, Mr. Asquith desired to have the advice of represen-tive Indians on the attainment of self-government by India. His Secretary of State was Mr. Austen Chamberlain who wished to make a declaration in this behalf. The elected members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council prepared a memorandum which was adopted unanimously by both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. This joint scheme came to be known as the Congress-League Scheme, but this was not accepted by the British Government. Instead a scheme prepared by Mr. Lionel Curtis who came to Delhi in 1917 and suggested a dyarchical form of Government seemed to find official favour. Ultimately, on the 20th of August 1917, Mr. Montagu, who had become Secretary of State for India, made an announcement in Parliament pleading for the progressive realisation of responsible government for India.

Mrs. Annie Besant was then the most vocal spokesman of self-government for India. She had formed the Home Rule League which attracted many of the leading Indian politicians of the day. The Government disapproved of her activities and she was soon interned under orders of the Governor of Madras. Das fully supported her views and had already joined the League. He protested vigorously against her internment. At a meeting of the Indian Association in Calcutta, he said :

> "I do not think the God of Humanity was crucified only once. Tyrants and oppressors have crucified humanity again and again, Every outrage on humanity is a fresh nail driven through his sacred flesh."

Das was anxious that Mrs. Besant should preside over the next session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in December 1917. The reception committee voted in her favour but Shri Baikuntha Nath Sen, the chairman of the reception committee, held that the election was invalid. Surendra Nath Benerjea, who was the leader of the Provincial Congress Committee, wanted to have as President the Raja of Mahmudabad He wished that the election should be decided by the All-India Congress Committee in which he had a majority. In the meantime, six other Provincial Congress Committees in addition to Bengal had already voted in favour of Mrs. Besant.

Das took his stand on the principle of demoracy which the Congress organisation. He expressed great regard for Shri Baikuntha Sen, who was a friend of his father, but he felt that Shri Sen had gone against the wishes of the majority in the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. He, therefore, moved that Rabindranath Tagore should be elected chairman of the reception committee in place of Shri Sen. A crisis seemed unavoidable when Sir Chandra Madhab Ghose, a retired Judge of the Calcutta High Court and once its acting Chief Justice, intervened and brought about a settlement. It was agreed that Mrs. Besant would be elected President of the Congress while Rabindranath Tagore and Shri Sen should both resign from the reception committee. After their resignation was accepted, Shri Sen would be re-elected chairman of the committee. Tagore immediately resigned his seat and Shri Sen remained the chairman.

The meeting of the Congress proved a great success Mrs. Besant was received by the people with great enthusian. After the session, Das started a tour of the province and repeatedly declared that what he was working for was "neither self-government for Hindus alone nor for Muslims alone nor for the landlords and marchants alone, but self-governmedt of the people of India where the interest of all will be protected."

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, after his announcement on the 20th of August 1917, came to India in November and met Das the other national leaders during his tour. In an interview with Das, which lasted for three hours, the following conversation is reported to have taken place :

"*Mr. Montagu*—Yes, Mr. Das, what are your views towards the reforms that Lionel Curtis suggests ?

Das—The reforms suggested by Curtis cannot succeed. Provincial autonomy is essential.

Montagu—But I understand you were for the Dyarchical Scheme as suggested by Lionel Curits.

Das—Yes, I was, as a concession in weakness, for the sake of unity. I had hopes that Anglo-Indians would join us. I, therefore, toned down my demand, but their militant attitude has sent me back to my original ideal.

Lord Chelmsford remarked, probably with disgust :

"Is it not premature to speak of provincial autonomy ? Some reforms may be given as a trial. If you work satisfactorily, you

will also get further rights in time."

Mr. Montagu has left a record of his impressions in the following words :

> "In December 1917, I had a talk with C.R. Das an extremist, but a most sensible fellow. He originally was an advocate of the Curtis Scheme. Now he absolutely repudiates it. His demand is complete responsibility at once for local government. Das argued very strongly. I argued with him. I implored him. I saw him privately and he added : The half-way house is no good; there is no intermediate stage possible between Responsible Government and complete responsibility. He attracted me enormously. But his distrust is for the police and the way in which the C.I.D. is used."
>
> "Das further added : 'Well, give us Standing Committees, a new electorate, decent Legislative Councils and no powers for five years, promising us it all in five years in your House of Parliament I would rather have this than steps that I know will not work.' "

The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1917 was one of the turning points in the history of the organisation. Till then the Congress had been controlled by the Moderate elements among political workers. After the death of Gokhale and the retirement of Sir Ferozeshah Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjea become the most important leader of the organisation. Among his chief lieutenants were Bhupendra Nath Bose and Ambica Charan Mozumdar, who also were Moderates. The election of Mrs. Annie Besant was the first successful challenge to Surendra Nath's leadership. The ascendancy of the Moderate elements began to wane. A new leadership consisting of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, C.R. Das, Byomkesh Chakraborty Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Hasan Imam came into power. Mrs. Besant's Home Rule League became the controlling authority of the Congress and as one of her chief lieutenants, C.R. Das became one of the foremost personalities in the political and national life of India.

Surendra Nath Banerjea delivered a powerful speech on self-government at this session of the Congress but this was his last speech from the forum. He never again spoke from the platform of the Congress and was virtually replaced by Das,

In a speech during this period, Das referred to the terrorist movement which had then captured the imagination of a large section of young men in Bengal and had admirers in other parts of India. Das did not himself believe in terrorism and secret societies, but he could not help being attracted by the idealism which was displayed of the Congress. He was largely responsible for the :

> "Being thwarted in their zeal to freedom they grow impatient and believe in revolution. They see before their eyes that all nations, big and small, are eager from freedom. These liberty-loving young men smarting under foreign rule have become impatient for freedom. You give them freedom, you tell frankly that you will change the Constitution, that you will administer the country of their good and you will find all anarchism will be extirpated. You want soldiers, I shall give you. If you give us liberty, I shall give up my practice for six months and shall raise an adequate army from the country."

The rift between the two sections of the Congress soon became still wider. A draft resolution on reforms was published on the 8th of July 1918 over the signature of the Secretary of State of India and the Governor-General after their report received the assent of the British Government. A special conference of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was held three days after the announcement. The Moderates found themselves in a minority at this conference which regarded the reforms as disappointing. A final decision was, however, left to the special session of the Indian National Congress to be held in Bombay on the 29th of August 1918. Surendra Nath Banerjea accepted the report while Das considered it thoroughly inadequate. The elections had given a clear majority to supporters of Das in both the A.I.C.C. and the various Provincial Congress Committees.

Surendra Nath Banerjea now left the Congress and started the Liberal League with himself as the President. With his retirement, Das became the chief figure in the Bengal Congress and the brunt of the work of the Congress organisation fell on him. It was mainly through his efforts that the site in Bombay was chosen and Syed Hasan Imam was elected President of the special session. He himself contributed about Rs. 10,000 towards the expenses of

the session. With his characteristic generosity and desire to carry as large a section of the people as possible with him. Das felt that the Moderate elements should be given another opportunity to participate in the activities of the Congress. He was largely responsible for the following resolution passed at the special session :

> "The Congress appreciates attempts on the part of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State and His Excellency the Viceory to inaugurate a system of responsible government in India and while it recognises that the proposals constitute an advance, it holds that the proposals as a whole are disappointing and unsatisfactory . . . . ."

The annual session of the Congress met in Delhi in December 1918 under the Presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The Congress reaffirmed the Bombay resolution relating to self-government and expressed the view that full responsible government should immediately be introduced in the Provinces of British India. The resolution was moved by Shri B.C. Chakraborty and soconded by Shri Vitthalbhai Patel.

Mrs. Besent, Shri Srinivasa Sastri, Shri B.N. Sharma and a few other Moderate leaders attended this session and moved certain amendments. Shri Sastri argued that the words 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' be omitted from the text of the resolution. He did not also wish to fix any time limit. Mrs. Besant felt that the Bombay resolution should be repeated as it was settled as a compromise between the Nationalist group and the Moderate group but she also did not like a time limit. She advised the delegates to advance steadily and cautiously and uttered a warning against precipitate action.

Das thanked Mrs. Besant and Shri Sastri for attending the Congress but said he could not accept their point of view. He aruged that India was being ruled by a bureaucracy, and self-government would mean the end of bureaucratic rule. It was therefore, hardly likely that the Civil Service, which was the real ruler of the country would consent to introduce self-government quickly and thus end its own supremacy unless a time limit was fixed. He also took objection to Shri Sarstri's move to delate the words disappointing and unsatistactory. He asked the delegates to put their hands on their hearts and answer the question for

themselves whether they were satisfied or disappointed.

Shri Sastri had pleaded that the Congress should not press for provincial autonomy as the country was committed to the Curtis Scheme. Das replied that nobody in India had accepted the scheme, and he was lustily cheered by the whole audience.

Das then turned to deal with the arguments advanced by Mrs. Besant. She had emphasised the need of compromise but Das retorted, "Mrs. Besant in out of court here. Who were the parties to the compact ? The Moderates as a party have not joined the Congress. Therefore, it is the Moderates who have broken the compact and he that breaks the compact has no right to insist on the performance of the compact by the other party. I again ask—".

Mrs. Besant – "I said nothing about a compact. I said it was a compromise."

Das—"I stand corrected. Mrs. Besant says she did not use the word compact but compromise. Well what I ask is this : Between whom was that compromise ? Compromise means two parties—Moderates and Nationalists. If some of the Moderates joined, who are those Moderates ? What right have they to barter away the rights of the people ? So far as I am concerned. I entered into that compromise upon a surrender of points by us when I hoped that the Moderate party as a whole wonld join us. The Moderate party has not joined us. Are we still to go by that compromise and sell our birthright because the Moderate party does not join us ? Since the Congress session held in Bombay, the country has declared its opinion in Bombay. Madras, United Provinces, Bengal and elsewhere. Is it your personal right that there can be a bidding compact or compromise or agreement ? And because you have chosen this compromise must you stand by it for ever and ever ? I say such a principle is pernicious and I refuse to follow it. The whole of the country demands it and I call upon you to do your duty and reject the amendments *in toto*".

In the sequel, all the amendments were lost and the resolution was accepted by an overwhelming majority. This result was largely due to the eloquence of Das Prof. Jitendra Lal Banerjee has left on record the following account of discussions in the sub-committee meeting which preceded the opening session :

"After the second day's sitting of the Congress, the Subjects Committee met at the appointed hour. Discussions and debates dragged on till midnight. The whole discussion was about the Reforms. Deshbandhu was our leader. We were to oppose the Reforms. On the other side were ranged many distinguished personages. Mrs. Besant, Srinivasa Sastri and the President himself, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Mr. Das rose after noon and by his wonderful eloquence he tore into shreds the arguments of his opponents. The victory wise his. When we were coming out after the dissolution of the meeting we found the veteran old Dewan of Travancore, Mr. V.P. Madhav Rao, in spite of his old age and severe winter of Delhi seated there leaning against the outer wall. He asked me to sit down and listen to him. He said : 'How beautifully Das fired up ! I never saw anything like it."

The change in the temper of the Congress may be inferred from the fact that Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tılak was elected by the Congress to represent India before the Joint Parliamentary Committee in London.

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DESHABANDHU CHITTA RANJAN DAS : A BRIEF SURVEY OF HIS LIFE AND WORK

SUKUMAR RANJAN DAS M.A.*

Chitta Ranjan Das, endearingly called "Deshabandhu Das." came of a well-known Vaidya family of the village of Telirbag in Bikrampur in the District of Dacca. Bikrampur was once the pride of Eastern Bengal, and the cynosure of the whole of Hindusthan. In its palmy days of yore, famous for its merchandise, it carried on trade with Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, and Arabia. In this land of learning and culture was born the great Brahmin prince Silabhadra, the teacher of the Chinese traveller Hiant-Chuang, it was the birth-place of Dipankar Srijnan, the great teacher of atheism; and here was born Birabhadra, the highest prelate of the Buddhist Temple at Nalanda. Even many of the talented men of the present age--the foremost amongst whom now is the great savant Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Kt., F.R.S.—hall from Bikrampur.

The family of Chitta Ranjan is exceptionally brilliant. His father, Bhuban Mohan Das, an ardent Brahma by adoption, a man of wide intellectual sympathies and considerable journalistic activities as editor of the *Brahma Public Opinion*, and, subsequently, of the *Bengal Public Opinion*, was by profession a solicitor

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of no mean standing, practising in the Calcutta High Court. Though commanding quite a handsome practice, he could not keep himself within his means. His generous disposition, added to his habits of extravagance—traits which seem to be almost inherent in the family and which Bhuban Mohan bequeathed to his son in so large a measure—proved his undoing. Towards the close of his professional career, he became an adjudicated bankrupt.

Chitta Ranjan Das was born on the 5th November 1870, in the City of Calcutta, of which he rose to be the first Mayor in 1924. He was the second child and the eldest son of his father—his only surviving—brother being Mr. Justice P.R. Das of the Patna High Court. After having received his early education at the London Missionary Society's School at Bhowanipur, whence he passed his Entrance Examination, and later at the Presidency College, Calcutta, whence he took his B.A. Degree in 1890, he went to England to sit for the I.C.S. examination and "was the last man out" in his year. This was more a coincidence than an accident. Chitta Ranjan had a bit of adverse history and the gates of those "astral regions" were considered by the authorities as too sacred. His political activities, while in England—consisting of electioneering speeches on behalf of Dadabhai Naoroji, the "G.O.M." of India, who was then trying to enter the British Parliament, and an address at a meeting under the presidency of of Mr. Gladstone to protest against some grossly offensive anti-Indian remarks of one Mr. John Maclean, M.P., which cost the latter his place in Parliament—were mainly responsible for his non-admission into the "heavenborn service." Thereupon, Chitta Ranjan joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1894. The same year he was enrolled as an Advocate of the Calcutta High Court.

As is usually the case with a beginner his career at the Bar was not at all a promising one. Besides, he had to start life with a thorn on his side. The taint of insolvency on his father's name, the wiping out of which he felt not only to be his filial duty but also a point of honour, made him impatient of waiting. So he shifted his practice to Mofussil Bars, and in a marvellously short time built up a decent practice and a sound reputation as a criminal lawyer. At this time his financial circumstances, never too bright, became embarrassing, and he was heavily involved—partly

in paying off his father's debts and partly on his own account. As a consequence, he too had to follow in the wake of his father by taking the shelter of the Insolvency Court. The debts had become time-barred when Chitta Ranjan, being in fairly easy circumstances, was able to discharge what was then only a moral obligation, and paid off his father's and his own debts to a pie. The effect was instantaneous : he at once rose "to the plane of a moral hero."

The turning point in his profession came when, in 1908, he was called upon to defend Srijut Arabinda Ghose in the famous Alipore Bomb Case. This task, trying as it was, brought him no financial relief, but on the contrary, financial embarrassment; but when, after a protracted hearing, the Court of Appeal acquitted Arabinda, the principal accused, it at once raised Chitta Ranjan to the rank of a legal luminary and payed the way for a roaring practice. Success now followed success, and many were the sensational cases with which he was later on associated in and out of Bengal – including the famous Munitions Board Case and the Dumraon Raj Adoption Case, from both of which he had later to withdraw at some stage or other at the call of the Non-Co-Operation Movement inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. With his success in the Dumraon Adoption Case in 1910 his position at the Bar was practically assured and he built up a large and lucrative practice, perhaps the largest and most lucrative ever enjoyed by any member of the Indian Bar.

Long before Chitta Ranjan was able to take an active part in politics, his genius was revealing itself in literature. In 1895 he published a volume of lyrics, "Malancha," which introduced a new element of freedom and realism into the modern literature of Bengal. Some poems of "Malancha" support atheism, and this made Chitta Ranjan unpopular in the Brahma Samaj. Many Brahmas, headed by the late Pandit Sivanath Sastri, did not even attend the marriage ceremoney of Chitta Ranjan, which took place in 1897 shortly after the publication of "Malancha." After this he published four more volumes of lyrics—"Mala," Antaryami," "Kishore-Kishoree" and "Sagar-Sangit." The first three volumes contain poems inspired by the Vaishnava Cult which is the special heritage of Bengal. But the most popular of Chitta Ranjan's lyrical volumes is his "Sagar-Sangit." In this work the poet has woven in lyrics the high sentiments which stole into his heart as

they came dancing on the waves of the sea. Chitta Ranjan's lyrical talent is sufficiently revealed in these four volumes. Some of the poems are in matter and form gems of perfect beauty—the charm is much enhanced by the pathos with which the poet describes his yearning for God whom he seeks with the enthusiasm of a lover. They are as much an unmistakable proof of his profound poetic and literary gifts as the illustration of his peculiar religious temperament and conceptions. In order to spread the Vaishnava culture and to give a healthy tone to modern Bengali literature, Chitta Ranjan started a new Bengali monthly, the *Narayana*, which secured for its contributors some of the highest literateurs of Bengal. In recognition of his literary services, the Literary Conference of Bengal, which had its Annual Session at Bankipore in 1915, elected him President of the Literary Section, where he read a paper on the lyrics of Bengal. Next year he was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Literary Conference in its Annual Session at Dacca. Since then Chitta Ranjan wrote several *Kirtan* songs after the style of the Vaishnava poets—some of which are now published. Those which have been them are of opinion that they are superb in their conception and unique in literary grandeur and sweet melody.

Chitta Ranjan's interest in politics had manifested itself early in this career, of which he gave such eloquent evidence when preparing for the Indian Civil Service. During the Anti-Parition Agitation he was ultimately associated with the new National Movement and its two organs –*New India* and *Bande Mataram*. He had, however, no active connection with politics for a member of years until in April 1917 he was called upon to preside over the Section of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Bhowanipur. His Presidential Address, which was in Bengali, was a memorable uttarance, instinct with lofty idealism and patriotic fervour. Patriotism was with him a consuming passion, and love of country a sacred part of his religion. "With me," he once said at a meeting at Mymensingh, "work for my country is not an imitation of European politics. It is part of my religion. It is part and parcel of all the idealism of my life. I find in the conception of my country the expression also of Divinity. The service of country and nationality is service of humanity. Service of humanity is worship of God."

He had a deep veneration for the ancient culture of India and

the lofty spirituality of Hinduism, and was never tired of repeating: "We are the inheritors of a great culture, we are the stewards of a spirituality which must be presented to the world. India was never conquered, and, God willing, it will never be conquered for all times to come. India will impress whole world. The work has commenced today and it will go on increasing till the world will listen to the message of India."

The actual advent of Chitta Ranjan into the political arena was immediately inspired by the Announcement made by Mr. Montagu in the British House of Commons on the 20th August 1917. The Announcement, which was later on more honoured in the breach than in the observance, was memorable in the sense that it was the first time that the British Government officially defined *Swaraj* as the political goal of India. It was at this time that he played a great part in connection with the controversy over the question of the election of Mrs. Besant as President of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress. Shortly before the Congress met in Calcutta, he went on a lecturing tour in Eastern Bengal when, in every place he visited, he addressed immense gatherings on his ideas of Self-Government. When the Congress met in Wellington Square, Calcutta, he delivered an impassioned speech on India's right to build-up her own Constitution in a way which suited her genius. This has been the key-note of almost all his political utterances.

Both at the Special Session of the Congress at Bombay in 1918 and at the Annual Session at Delhi in December of the same year, Chitta Ranjan led those who considered the Scheme of Indian Reforms, as announced by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu, to be wholly inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing, and was completely successful in putting forth the demand for Provincial Autonomy against the opposition of an influential body of opinion led by Mrs. Besant herself.

In the autumn of 1919 Chitta Ranjan went to the Punjab in connection with the enquiry set on foot by the Congress into the causes of the Punjab disturbances and the administration of martial law that had followed them. For more than three months he remained in the Punjab at great personal sacrifice and devoted himself to the work of the Congress Enquiry Committee with a zeal and thoroughness that won him the love and admiration of the people. In December 1919 when the Congress met at Amritsar

he opposed co-operation with the Government in the working of the Reforms ushered in by the Government of India Act. In that connection he said : "I care not whether you have Parliamentary Councils or Legislative Councils divided into so many compartments, whether you have an Upper House and a Lower House in order to govern the country, I want India to say in one voice that we will govern ourselves. That is the right we have, no Government can deprive us of that right. The moment you discover that you will get Swaraj." A compromise was, however, arrived at, by which the Congress, while declaring the Reforms Act to be inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing, proposed to so work the Reforms as to bring about full Responsible Government at the earliest possible date.

The Indian National Congress met at a Special Session at Calcutta in September 1920 to consider the situation arising out of the ıeport of the Hunter Committee on the Punjab affairs and the dismemberment of Turkey by the Treaty of Sevres with a view to attaining Swaraj and to securing the redress of the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat grievances. Mahatma Gandhi presented a five-old programme of Non-Co-Operaiion with the Government: Chitta Ranjan sought to have some of the items changed, but the Congress adopted the programme in its entirety. Three months later at Nagpur he accepted Mahatma's lead and returned to Calcutta to give up his princely practice at the Bar and to renounce all the comforts and luxuries that wealth could give. The whole country was moved to its deepest at this supreme act of self-sacrifice and self-denial. It captivated the hearts of his countrymen as no other act of his had done before. Henceforth he was their sole leader—"Deshabandhu," the friend of the country. He threw himself heart and soul into the Non-Co-Operation Movement and carried its message far and wide.

The year 1921 was an eventful year for Deshabandhu Das. At his call the students deserted their schools and colleges by thousands, well-known members of the legal profession in Calcutta and in the mofossil suspended their practice, National Schools sprang up everywhere and he marched on from triumph to triumph. The exodus of the coolies from the tea gardens of Assam Bengal Railway employees engaged his attention for the greater part of the early months of 1921. In the meantime the volunteer organisations in connection with the Congress, which

had taken a leading part in organising the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales in November, were declared illegal by the Local Government. Deshabandhu in reply declared that the order of the Government itself was unlawful and put forth all his efforts and the entire resources of the Congress in organising bands of volunteers to court arrest by defying this arbitrary declaration of the Government. *Chira Ranjan Das* the only son of Deshabandhu Das, was arrested along with the first batch and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Sreejukta *Basanti Devi* (Mrs. C.R. Das) and Sreejukta *Urmila Devi* (sister of Mr. C.R. Das) were also arrested on the allegation that, under cover of selling *Khaddar*, they were obstructing the highway for effecting a *Hartal*. Other arrests followed in the train and Deshandhu Das himself was arrested on a charge under Section 17-B of the Criminal Law Amendment Act on the 11th December, 1921 and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In the meantime he was elected President of the next Session of the Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad. On the eve of his arrest he delivered the following message to the volunteers : "My first word and my last word to you is never to forsake the ideal of Non-Violent Non-Co-Operation. Let us not forget that we the Non-Co-Operators claim to hold the country. Let us realize that to the extent to which we do not succeed in so controlling the masses—be they hooligans or not—to that extent Non-Co-Operation has failed. The responsibilities are ours—if we fail to exercise control over the masses, how can we claim to have success ?"

On his release from jail in August 1922, he was unanimously elected President of the Congress at Gaya. There he definitely announced his faith in "Non-Co-Operation from within the Councils," and although he was unable to carry the Congress with him, he formed a new organisation, formerly known as the Congress-Swaraj-Khilafat Party and later as the Swaraj Party. At the Special Session of the Congress at Delhi his programme of Council-Entry was accepted which was confirmed at the Cocanada Session of the Congress in December 1923, under the Presidency of Moulana Mohammad Ali.

Deshabandhu Das formed the great Swaraj Party out of nothing—and it swept Bengal at the General Election of 1923. He declined to accept the offer of Lord Lytton to undertake the responsibility of the Transferred Departments, and though he was

the leader of a minority in Council he smashed all the machinations of official resourcefulness and semi-official intriguing. Under his lead the Bengal Council definitely refused to vote the salaries of Ministers and to give its sanction to the Bengal Ordinance. He killed Diarchy in Bengal and shook the Bureaucracy from Calcutta to Whitehall to its very foundations.

Early in 1924, when the new Calcutta Municipal Act came into operation, the first election under it was contested on behalf of the Congress under the direction of Deshabandhu Das. The election campaign, which resulted in the complete victory of the Congress candidates, was a personal triumph of Deshabandhu Das. The new Corporation elected him the first Mayor of Calcutta, and in the inaugural address he delivered on the occasion (April 16, 1924) he sketched out a programme of work which met with the approval of all sections of the citizens of Calcutta. He was re-elected Mayor for the second time in April, 1925. It can be affirmed without fear of contradiction that Deshabandhu Das proved himself an ideal Mayor.

The Government of Lord Lytton tried to strike at the root of the Swaraj Party from within by arresting some of the choicest of his workers. There was an all-India protest and the Bengal Council threw up the Government Bill by a large majority. The Governor certified it and the Ordinance received the Royal Assent in defiance of the united opposition of the people.

In the meanwhile Deshabandhu Das promulgated the Hindu-Muslim Pact, which raised a fierce controversy, but dispassionate minds will concede that it was inspired by the highest statesmanship. He was a friend and advocate of the rights of minorities, and an apostle of Hindu-Muslim Unity, and, therefore, he could not but be the champion of the Hindu-Muslim Pact.

In June 1925 Deshabandhu was unanimously elected President of the Faridpur Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference. In his Presidential Address he laid down his political views in clear and unmistakable terms. He discussed, in the clearest possible language, his conception as to : (1) the ideal that we should fight for, and (2) the method that we should adopt effectively for its realisation. It was the best proof that he was not out merely to destroy but also to help in the reconstruction, The first part of the programme he had fulfilled—he had convinced the world that the Reforms were not in reality a redemption of the British

promises, made during the War, to satisfy Indian aspiration; and that there was deepdiscontent. To give effect to the second part, or to test if the time was yet for it, he made his mighty "gesture". The gesture was not to co-operate, but to negotiate for co-operation on honorable terms. It is a great tragedy that he did not live to give practical interpretation to his Faridpur Message and to carry out all its implication with his own hand.

Deshabandhu Das had been in an indifferent state of health for more than six months, and the heavy burden of Council and Corporation work told greatly on his health. He went to Patna, where the change did him some good; but as no permanent improvement was noticeable, he went to Darjeeling to recoup his health, and death overtook him there. On the 16th June 1925, at 5 P.M , after a brief illness, passed away, at a most critical juncture in the fortunes of the nation, Bengal's beloved idol *Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das.*

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CHITTARANJAN DASS : A SYMBOL OF FLAMING PATRIOTISM

K. THIAGARAJAN

It has rightly been said that Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was perhaps the greatest Bengali of the first quarter of this century. But he was not merely a great Bengali, he was, by common consent, one of the greatest Indians we can remember, the founder and builder of the best organised school of political thought in India. The record of his career, with that of the evolution of the political thought of the country in his days, is bound to fill many pages in the annals of modern India. He attained an exalted status in our national histoiy. The nation remembers him because from the dim past his image creeps into the present and will become a part of the future.

Chittaranjan Das was born on November 5, 1870, in Calcutta. son of Bhubon Mohan Das, a solicitor who hailed from Vikrampur in Dacca district (now in Bangladesh), which was the capital of medieval Bengal, Vikrampur was also the centre of literary, social and intellectual activities. This tradition was ingrained in C.R. Das.

LITERARY PURSUITS

C.R. Das was educated at Presidency College, Calcutta, where he was an active figure in the Students' Association. After graduation, he went to England and sat for the I.C.S, examination. He was not selected. He returned to India and entrolled himself

as a Barrister in the Calcutta Bar. The already heavily crowded Calcutta Bar could not provide good scope for newcomers and Das had to content himself for years with literary pursuits. A collection of lyrics, the first of five volumes of poetry by him, appeared in 1895 under the title, *Malancha* (Gardener), which created a furore; the yonng poet had questioned every thing, from God to social conventions. In his later poems, Das showed a marked affinity to the mystic outpourings of the 16th century Vaishnaya poets of Bengal Born a Brahmo Samajist, he turned away from it and became strongly attached to Vaishnavism in his later years. In his middle age, he got his two daughters married outside his own caste ignoring threats and even refusing to get the marriage registered as a precaution.

THE GAYA CONGRESS

C.R. Das shot into fame over-night in 1908 by his brilliant defence of Aurobindo Ghosh, the flaming apostle of extreme nationalism in Bengal. Although C.R. Das joined the Congress in 1906, he was dragged into active politics only in 1917, when he was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Conference. He gave up a lucrative practice at the Bar in 1919 when the Congress declared for Non-Cooperation with the Government. Das at first opposed it but later accepted it. In definance of the Government ban on volunteers, Das, issued a clarion call for a lakh of volunteers and courted arrest with members of his family. He was taken to jail a fortnight before he was to preside over the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in 1921. He used the six months he was in prison for writing on the Vaishnava poets of Bengal, a history of Indian nationalism, and a dictionary of the Bengali language.

In the history of the Congress, the presidential address of C.R. Das stands as a magnificent chapter. It bears the stamp of a far-sighted statesman. It is one of his major speeches since 1917 when he delivered an equally brilliant speech as the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress. In his Gaya Congress address be discussed at length the principles of non-co-operation and explained the futility of boycotting the elections In this remarkable address, he first advanced his proposal to depart from Mahatma Gandhi's programme on a very crucial

issue, and boldly made a bid for entry into the Councils. He made Gaya Congress the starting point of a new campaign, and before the delegates dispersed at the close of the session, he had established the Swaraj Party with Motilal Nehru and some others for "carring non-cooperation into the Councils".

The personality of Deshabandhu was a rare combination. His was a life of great sacrifice and dedication. Mr. Sarojini Naidu rightly said : "Kingly was Deshabandhu Das in every impulse and gesture of his life, royal alike in the splendour of his bounty and the splendour of his renunciation". He was one of the founders of that freedom which we have won. He was one of the great generals of that battle. He died at the height of his power and glory. A visionary, a dreamer and an apostle of revolt, Das was an implaceable foe of the bureaucracy. In the battle for freedom he gave no quarter and asked for none. No man after Tilak preached the gospel of Swaraj with the consisteney and insistence of Das.

Politics was the very breath of his life; he took to it seriously, almost raising it to the level of a religion. He was a practical idealist who knew how to combine what is desirable with what is possible. He was never a slave to slogans and had an uncommon power of separating the essentials from the irrelevant and the peripheral. It is indeed a measure of his sagacity and vision that more than ten years before the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1935, he had clearly foreseen that the next advance on the political front would be the achievement of provincial autonomy and a federal central government.

SENSE OF DUTY AND A PASSION FOR TRUTH

It is needless to refer at length to his brilliant performances as the leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Legislative Council. According to Disraeli, a great man is one who influences the lives of men in a radical manner, who gives a new direction to men's thoughts and actions. Deshabandhu gave shape to the nebulous ideas of national work in the difficult circumstances of his day. Above all, he gave a tone to Indian politics. It was a sense of duty fortified by a passion for truth and freedom that brought him to the forefront.

The Bengal Provincial Conference was the last major public

function attended by C.R. Das. There he pleaded with a rare consistency for an all-India Federation. But he did not live long to celebrate on this grand dream. He was a sick man, suffering from weekly fevers and he sensed that he had passed his zenith and that the shadow of death had already overtaken him. He moved him-self to Darjeeling for rest and was visited there by Mahatma Gandhi and Mrs. Annie Besant. He decided to retire from politics and donated his palatial house in Russa Street in Calcutta to the country for the cause of medical education for women.

History will record that, through his matchless service and sacrifice, Deshabandhu had transformed his emotionalism into a spirtual force, which was and still remains, more spiritual than material. Rabindranath Tagore has summed up the life-work of this great man in his inimitable way : "Man truly reveals himself through his gift, and the best gift that Chittaranjan has left for his countrymen is not any particular political or social programme, but the creative force of a great aspiration that has taken deathless form in the sacrifice which his life represents." Truer words have never been spoken, and Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das remains a beacon-light for many generations to come.

21

REMEMBERING DESHABANDHU CHITTA RANJAN DAS

SATISH MISHRA

The national movement in India was carried forward by certain personalities, who were partly its creators and partly its creation. Chitta Ranjan Das was one of the creators. He was also one of these personalities who gave new breath, vigour and dimensions to the freedom movement. The people's friend (*Deshabandhu*) C.R. Das, was a unique combination of Intelligence, hardwork and of tenacity of purpose.

Chitta Ranjan Das was born in Calcutta on Saturday the November 5, 1870 in a middle class lawyer's family, and had a modest beginning. At the age of 16, Chitta Ranjan joined the Presidency College, which has produced some of the most prominent figures of modern India. C.R. Das was a great love of his mother tongue, Bengali language, and wanted Bengali to be introduced as a second language in the University Examinations and met the Vice-Chancellor in this connection. His plea was rejected as the Vice-Chancellor thought it might detract from the prestige and importance of Sanskrit.

In 1890, Chitta Ranjan Das was sent to England to compete in the India Civil Service examination. There in London, Das occupied himself with politics. He delivered a speech in support of Dadabhai Naoroji's candidature as an MP in the British House of Commons in consequence of which he was not accepted in the ICS. He also actively supported the Liberal Party. A letter written to his father by Sir Richard Garth, an ex-chief Justice of Calcutta,

reveals the fact of C.R. Das's indulgence in political activities as the cause of not qualifying in the ICS list. He wrote, "I tried my best, but the fiery speeches of your son at Oldham have spoiled everything."

While in England, Chitta Ranjan made fiery speeches and repudiated the ugly insinuations of James Maclean. In refuting the charges made by Maclean that India was, "conquered by sword", he retorted that triumph of Britain over India by swords or bayonets alone is not a correct statement.

It was good that Das did not join the Indian Civil Services. Had he joined, the country would have missed a devoted patriot. Chitta Ranjan returned to where he truly belonged. While in England, he was called to the English Bar in 1893, by the Honourable Society of Inner Temple. At the end of the year C.R. Das returned to India and in December he was sworn in as the advocate of the Calcutta High Court. It was to take few years for proving his legal worth.

These years were of fierce competition for judicial practice. Like many other young lawyers, he also had to struggle hard and face many disappointments in his early career. The outlook indeed looked gloomy for him. His father had incurred heavy personal debts. In addition he had incurred obligation on behalf of other because of his generous nature.

Young Chitta Ranjan was in great financial troubles. When the situation could not be averted he and his father had to seek protection of the insolvency court. It was his father who had signed as surety on a promissory note of Rs. 30,000. Das on his return from England was confronted with this problem and he readuly signed as co-debtor. But when Chitta Ranjan could not establish his practice and the situation could not be postponed further, Chitta Ranjan Das and his father Bhuban Mohan were declared insolvents. When Chitta Ranjan settled well in his practise, he arranged to pay in full to his creditors to which he was not obliged.

In the meantime when C.R. Das's legal practice was not in full swing, another quality of this great man came to the limelight. Chitta Ranjan as a poet started publishing his poetry. It was natural that a man of strong fellings and imagination should be attracted to literature. In 1895, his first book of verses named *Malancha* was published. This consists of devotional poems and

lyrics of nature. There are also poems showing Das's sympathy with underdoge of society. A poem entitled *The Harlot* raised a storm of protest and brought down the dislike and hatred of Brahmo Samaj for Chitta Ranjan's pronounced atheistic and Bohemian view of life. As a great iconoclast, Chitta Ranjan Das rejected the conventional morality of that age.

If *Malancha* introduced Das a poet, *Sagar-Sangeet* made him famous. It was written when C.R. Das was returning from England by sea. The poems are not only remarkable for the novelty of the subject, but also for this beauty of thought and literary grace. C.R. Das had a deep veneration for the lofty spiritualism of Hinduism. And arround this them, his poetry revolves.

Up to 1907, Chitta Ranjan could not achieve much in legal profession. In 1907, came the famous Alipore Bomb Case in which Shri Aurobindo Ghosh and 35 others were acused for conspiring to wage war against the King. In this case C. R. Das proved his legal skill and Shri Aurohindo was acquitted. Then came the case of Braham Bandhab Upadhayya, the editor of Bengali daily *Sandya*. In this case too, Chitta Ranjan showed his legal acumen.

The Chief Justice was greatly impressed by Das's presentation of his case. The Alipore Bomb Case established his reputation as one of the greatest lawyers on the criminal side, the Dumraon case proved that Das was equally good in civil law also. C.R. Das was in active politics for only eight years. But his contribution many be measured in the services that he rendered, not in terms of years. Chitta Ranjan had jumped into the political arena in most critical and momentus times when, "history was running through the track of centuries in many year". The First World War was in its last legr and the complexion of the world was fast changing,

For Chitta Ranjan, politics was religion and service to the nation was the worship of God. Patriotism was his passion and love of country was deep in his blood. In his evidence in 1917 before Mr. Montague he demanded complete centrol of the purse as well as control over all the services in the country.

The actual advent of Chitta Ranjan into the political field was inspired by the announcement made by Mr. Montague. In April 1917, he was invited to preside over the Bengal Provincial

Conference in Calcutta. At the Calcutta Congress Session; Das delivered a speech on India's right to bulid her own constitution suiting her own genius.

But at the special session of the Congress at Bombay in 1918 and as the annual session of Delhi, Chitta Ranjan led those who considered the scheme of Indian reforms, as announced by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montague, to be wholly inadeqate, unsatisfactory and disappointing C.R. Das was successful in putting forth the demad for provincial autonomy against a strong opposition.

Chitta Ranjan Das always aimed at complete independence and emphasised for self reliance. He was of the opinion that for the uplift of the country, the village must receive full attention. C.R. Das said in Dehra Dun Conference, "I want Swaraj for the masses and not for classes. I don't care for the bourgeoisie".

C.R. Das for the first time met Gandhiji in 1915. And in 1919 Gandhiji asked him to head the Congress enquiry into the Jalianwalla Bagh tragedy. In December, 1919, when the Congress met at Amritsar, he opposed cooperation with the government in the working of the reforms ushered in by the Government of India Act of 1919. He said. "I care not whether you have an upper house or lower house in order to govern the country. I want India to say in one voice that we will govern ourselves."

It was during the Jalianwalla Bagh enquiry that Chitta Ranjan Das finally realized that the British presence in India could not be tolerated any longer and that to eliminate it was the task of every Indian. In order to do so, it was necessary to stop all contact with the British. Inevitably, therefore, at the call of Gandhiji at Nagpur Congress in 1920, he announced that he would give up his legal practice forthwith.

It was at this juncture that he was given the title of *Deshabandhu.* C.R. Das had left the princely practice of Rs. 50,000 in a moment. Prince Das turned into a proper Desabandhu. Deshabandhu wholly cooperated with Gandiji in the Non-cooperation Movement and with his efforts and enthusiasm, a large number of people left their profession and the students abandoned their studies.

The movement for Civil Disobedience was launced Deshabandhu was arrested. While he was in jail C.R. Das was elected the President of the Congress. He sent his address from the jail. Deshabandu was of the opinion that opposition of the government

should be done from inside the councils. C.R. Das and other supported the idea of entry into the Councils. In the meantime, Chitta Ranjan Das was again elected the President of the Congress for Gaya session. There the resolution of entry into the Councils supported by him was lost. At this C.R. Das and others like Motilal Nehru resigned from their offices and formed the Swaraiya Party.

Subhash Chander Bose who had earlier returned from England met Deshabandhu and had become his most trusted and devoted disciple.

With the help of Subhash Chandra Bose, C.R. Das founded *Forward*, the first party newspaper in India. The elections for the councils were contested and then the work was started of opposing from inside the Councils. C.R. Das killed Dyarchy and thus the way was paved for provincial autonomy. For the first time the Calcutta civice administration was controlled by Indians under the leadership of Chitta Ranjan Das.

Deshbandhu was the first person to work for national integration. C.R. Das realised that the colonialisis would play the game of "Divide and Rule" among Indians. He thought that a comprehensive settlement covering all forms of community life—ecomomic, emotional, social and cultural—was necessary to strengthen national integration. It was a success to his efforts that when in 1923 the Swarajya party contested the second general elections under the Montaguo-Chelmsford Reforms, his party candidates won despite communal electorates.

Deshabandhu's love for the country was infinite and patriotism was his religion, Deshabandhu, whose health was fragile, passed away on May, 1925. Gurudev Tagore wrote about Das's contribution, "Man truly reveals himself thought his gifts and the best gift that Chitta Ranjan Das has left for the country is not any particular political or social programme but a crertive force of a great aspiration that has taken a deathless from in the sacrifice which his life represented."

He had an irresistible passion, from the very beginning of his conscious life, for looking after the Indian interests and while he was in England where he had gone to qualify himself for the Indian Civil Service, he made political speeches in connection with the election campaign of Dadabhai Naoroji and some of these speeches were very favourably noticed by the English and the Indian Press.[6] How strongly he felt for India is further evidenced by the fact that in 1892 when he was still in England he took serious exception to the speech of James Maclean—a member of the Parliament—who said that Indian Muhammadans were slaves and the Hindus were indentured slaves.[7] Chitta Ranjan Das at once convened a meeting of all the Indians in London as a protest against this offensive remark and delivered a powerful speech. London was in a state of excitement and the Liberals convened a huge meeting at Oldham under the Presidentship of Gladstone and, on being invited to make a speech on Indian affairs, C.R. Das drew the pointed attention of his British audience to the high-handedness practicised by the British Government in India. He said, *inter-alia*, "We now find the base Anglo-Indian policy of tyranny; the policy of irritation and more irritation, of repression and more repression; the policy which has been beautifully described by one of its advocates as the policy of pure and unmitigated force."[8]

Chitta Ranjan had a remarkable adaptability to changing circumstances. He was well-versed in the literature of Western conntries and in England, he grew a through-bred Englishman in dress and manners,[9] but he switched over to a life of remarkable simplicity when he joined the Non-violent non-co-operation movement. Dr. B.C. Roy revered him all the more for his great strength of mind in discarding long-standing habits. Recalling his admiration of Chitta Ranjan, he said, "It may be comparatively easy for some people to give up their source of income, but to my mind, to abjure a habit which had grown for years—habit of smoking and drinking—in one day indicated strength of mind and character which was unique."[10]

Dr. B.C. Roy was a frequent visitor to his house as a medical practitioner and he knew for a fact that Chitta Ranjan overnight gave up his drinks and smoke.[11] He also gave up his princely practice at the Bar and renounced all the comforts and luxuries that wealth could give and to which he had been accustomed all his life.[12] Entering the Non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement

meant much to him; it meant the sacrifice of his roaring legal practice and consequently of money but, more than this, it meant a sudden and violent change in his mode of life.

Chitta Ranjan Das was born in Calcutta on the 5th of November, 1870. His father Bhuban Mohan was a well-known Attorney of the Calcutta High Court and for sometime he was connected with Bengali Journalism.[13] Chitta Ranjan got his early education in the London Missionary Society School, Bhawanipore, whence he passed the Entrance Examination in 1886. He was subsequently admitted to the Presidency College, Calcutta, whence he graduated in 1889; taking his Bachelor's Degree in Arts and thereafter he sailed for England.[14] Though he came out successful in the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service his name was chucked off from the list of probationers and evidently owing to political activities in England, he was not considered fit for the Civil Service.[15] It was good that he was thus spared by the British Bureaucracy to serve the cause of Indian Independence. He was, however, not a loser even in money, for, as a lawyer, he earned a good deal and during the last three years preceding his participation in the Non-cooperation Movement his income was about fifty thousand rupees a month.'[16]

C.R. Das was, from the outset, convinced that the Europeans came to India to make money and were unwilling to concede any political authority to Indians. He believed that the Europeans were conscious of the fact, that, if *Swaraj* was obtained, the powers of Magistrates and Collectors, mostly Englishmen, would appreciably be curtailed and all possibility of writing "my dear so and so, will you see this done and will you see that done,"[17] would disappear. In spite of his foreign education, all his politics was in the Oriental background. He once said, "I find in the conception of my country, the expression also of divinity. With me nationality is no mere political conception borrowed from the philosophy of the West."[18] Brought up by an ideal mother, he regarded his country as the other self of his mother. He was moved to tears by the sweet remembrance of his noble mother whose sense of duty was exceptional, whose piety exemplary and fortitude unique.[19] C.R. Das's attitude of mind did not admit, therefore, of any doubts regarding the hostility of Britishers to Indian aspirations and he was convinced, that dependence on British goodwill in the matter of India's liberation would be futile and all efforts to base

expectation on that would unmistakably go in vain.

C.R. Das's attitude to Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was, however, not rigid. He was prepared to offer co-operation to them provided it was necessary to advance India's cause. He was definitely of opinion that India should work the reforms so far as it might be possible for the early establishment of full responsible Government. "We are", said he, "not opposed to co-operation, if co-operation helps us to attain that. We are not opposed to obstruction when that helps to attain our political goal."[20] But once he had entered the Non-cooperation Movement he gave it his unstinted support and he regarded it as the only method of warfare,[21] open to the Indians. He also said that any power that in any way hampered or embarrassed the self-realisation and self-fulfilment of the Indian Nation was an enemy of India and should as such be resisted.[22] He had no faith in Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and he was soon convinced that the system of the Reformed Councils with their steel-frame of the Indian Civil Service covered over by a dyarchy of deadlocks and departments was absolutely unsuited to the nature and genius of the Indian People.[23]

It was this man of iron—who had entered the Non-violent Non-cooperation Movement with the sole object of advancing the cause of India's independence. He courted arrest, along with the members of their family and they suffered all-round in the services of the country. Subhas Chandra Bose was his lieutenant.

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21. Report of the Thirty-Sixth Indian-National Congress held on the 27th and 28th December 1921, From Deshbandhu's message, p. 17.
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23

C.R. DAS

K. Iswara Dutt

In Chitta Ranjan Das the country lost one of the most outstanding political leaders of his generation—and his own Bengal (the undivided Bengal that was) 'the kingliest of dreamers'. Even the haughty Earl of Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India but no friend of hers, joined us in mourning 'the extinction of at vivid, arresting and versatile personality' while, at this end, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, from the Congress presidential chair at Kanpur, paid a thundering tribute to the man 'whose whole being was a Vaishnavite rhapsody of incomparable passion for the liberty of his Motherland.'

It was when Bengal rose to new heights of emotional idealism on the high tide of the Swadeshi movement, in direct challenge to the Curzonian gospel of partition, that Das, till then a struggling barrister and a second-rate lyricist, came into his own. It was the famous Alipore conspiracy case of 1908 in which Sri Aurobindo Ghose was involved that gave him a chance to distinguish himself alike as a legal luminary and a patron of political workers. His "celebrated; poetically inspired, and romantic peroration' in the trial of Aurobindo made Mr. Das's name a household word in a province which had no dearth of celebrities. Eight years later, he presided over' the Bengal Provincial Conference and definitely arrived in public life. In the Congress of 1917 held at Calcutta—he had a hand in the election of Mrs. Besant as the President—he raised his powerful voice in supporting the resolution on self-government and in championing the cause of the Ali Brothers who were then interned in

Chindwara.

It was the Punjab tragedy in 1919 that, however, discovered Mr. Das (Pandit Motilal Nehru). When he went to the Punjab for enquiry on behalf of the Congress, he not only paid his own expenses but was supposed to have spent during his stay there Rs. 50,000. "This large heartedness", as the Mahatma said, "towards all who sought his help made him the undisputed ruler of young hearts." At the Amritsar session of the Congress that year (1919) which was held under Motilal Nehru's presidentship, Gandhi, Tilak and Das were the three leading personalities. Each, a host in himself, pressed his own point of view in regard to the Reforms resolution; Mr. Das was for non-co-operation from within the councils or plain and downright obstruction. A split in the Congress seemed imminent but the Lokamanya effected a compromise by exhorting the Congress to adopt 'Responsive co-operation'—a phrase by which the Maharatta politicians for long swore.

A few months, later, the Khilafat problem, and the Hunter Committee Report created a grave situation in the country and a special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in September 1920, with Lala Lajpat Rai as the President. Gandhiji who was then beginning to hold an unprecedented sway over his countrymen declared his intention of launching the N.C.Q. movement while Mr. Das valiantly, and consistently with his stand at Amritsar, moved a resolution to the effect that the Nationalists would not accept ministry or any post of responsibility under the Government, that if the Nationalists were in a minority they would obstruct, good, bad, and indifferent measures alike, that if they were in a majority they would resign and seek re-election and again resign. In the full effulgence of his spiritual glow, the Mahatma dominated the session and scored a victory. Though he withdrew his candidature and made his colleagues withdraw theirs fiom the legislatures as a result of the Calcutta mandate, Mr. Das faced the Mahatma again at Nagpur in 1920. The working of these two, yet opposing forces, was thus felicitously described by their colleague, Mr. Jayakar :

> Vigorous, forceful, constitutional, law-abiding the doyen of the bar, Das was a mighty contrast, with his fine physique and tall figure to the feeble, humble, gentle, and apologetic

Mahatmaji. In every discussion that took place, one could observe these two great men working towards a Common end but with different mentalities. Das was like a great sledge-hammer beating his objects into shape as he wanted. Yet Gandhiji was like a fine chisel cutting through steel without any noise. Invariably Gandhiji prevailed by the superior force of truth and logic.

Mr. Das, however, left his impress on the Nagpur session and the resolution relating to the councils had to be considerably modified to meet his view point.

Mr. Das had fundamental differences with the Mahatma. Yet there was not the least doubt that he came under the saint's influence. In January 1921, he flung away the fortunes of a roaring practice at the bar and by that raie act of renunciation he at once became the idol of young Bengal and (*Desabandhu*) friend of the country. Stunned and puzzled at his marvellous influence, the Government of Bengal decided to keep on the Statute Book the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Seditous Meetings Act. The inability of the Bengal Government to stem the rising tide of the volunteers' rush to the jails in response to Mr. Das's clarion call and the failure of Lord Ronaldshay to arrive at a settlement with him led to his arrest which sent a wave of indignation throughout the country. Mr. Das was tried and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment in February 1922, when his countrymen bowed to him in utter admiration of not alone the courage with which he courted the rigours of jail life but of the example he had set.

The speeches and statements made by him after his release disclosed a change in his outlook. He pressed for a return to the councils and an attack on the citadels of authority through them. He would not shrink from expressing to the public what he felt or from practising what he preached. The fateful retreat at Bardoli, the incarceration of the Mahatma and the consequential depression in the country, the purposeless peregrinations of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, and the faith of several Congressmen in the council programme, gave an impetus to Mr. Das to raise his own standard at Gaya where he presided over the Congress. At Gaya, a battle royal was fought between the two wings of the Congress. But the one led by Mr. C.

Rajagopalachari scored. It was too much for a man of the fiery impulses and the imperious will of Mr. Das.

On January 1, 1923, he resigned his presidentship of the All-India Congress Committee and founded his own party. Several Congress leaders rallied round his banner, the foremost amoung them being the elder Pandit of Allahabad. There was a new stir in the country. He thundered that, within six months, he would convert the minority into a majority. From that day until sometime after the release of the Mahatma, the career of Mr. Das was one tumultous gallop, punctuated with the clash of swords, and the hint of battles. Neither did he ask for nor did he give quarter. He took no rest and gave no rest. He swept the land like a tornado. They said that he was out to occupy the throne rendered vacant by the Mahatma. He had no patience with opponents and detractors. A challenge was music to his ears. The more fierce the challenge, the more formidable he grew. The Swarajya Party soon gathered strength and became as powerful as popular, now offering battle to the No-changers, now inflicting severe losses on the bureaucracy.

The rise of the Swarajya Party (which led to internal differences and internecine squabbles in the Congress and to general depression in the country as well as the Hindu-Muslim riots) gave a tremendous set-back to the non-co-operation movement. It was at this juncture that a strong 'Centre Party', standing for unity and co-operation in Congress ranks, came into existence, chiefly through the offorts of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, and passed at the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay in the last week of May 1923, a compromise resolution, suspending all propaganda against council entry. But the resolution brought no peace to the land. It even raised a furious controversy about the power of the A.I.C.C., to suspend a resolution of the Congress. The initial split not only gave rise to party conflicts but created confusion. It was the special Congress that met at Delhi during the third week of September 1923, with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as president, that succeeded in averting an immediate crisis in the Congress by passing at the instance of Maulana Mahomed Ali who produced the Mahatma's message from the jail, a resolution ratifying the Bombay compromise and permitting Congressmen to contest elections and vote therein,

This decision for a time set at rest all controversies and substantially helped the Swarajya Party to sweep the polls in the elections to the councils.

When Mr. Das who deliberately stuck to his own province to make the experiment of council-wrecking, stood at the helm of the largest single party in the Bengal Legislative Council, Lord Lytton (the then Governor of Bengal) invited him on December 11, 1923 to form the Ministry but five days later, Mr. Das rejected Lord Lytton's invitation as his conditions were not accepted. Then came the Cocanada Congress which sprang yet another surprise on the Indian public. The arch-rebels at Gaya representing the two wings of the Congress, Mr. Das and Mr. Rajagopalachari joined hands. A resolution was passed ratifying the one carried at Delhi. At the Cocanada session Mr. Das had come in for severe criticism, for having hastily entered into a pact with the Bengal Muslims. He made an impassioned speech removing all misapprehensions. The pact, as a principal colleague of his in Bombay pointed out, was 'not the outcome of a low sense of expediency, but of a broadminded vision which saw the necessity of placating the Mahomedans as brethren.'

Following his unique success in capturing the Bengal Legislative Council, he annexed the Calcutta Corporation for the mere whistling. The position he acquired in the Corporation of the second largest city in the British Empire was an eye-sore to the Anglo-Indian world. Indeed, the *Statesman* caustically described the civic body as 'the Corporation nominated by Mr. C.R. Das'.

In May 1924, his presence at the Serajganj conference was the subject of a heated controversy in the press in view of his support, be it silent, to the resolution on Gopinath Saha. It may be recalled that 'while adhering to the policy of non-violence', the conference paid 'its respectful homage' to Gopinath Saha who suffered capital punishment in connection with Mr. Dey's murder, The reptile section of the press and panic-stricken politicians alike demanded Mr. Das's head on a charger while the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C., at its meeting in Ahmedabad at the initiative of no less a man than Gandhiji, made his position risky and unenviable. But Mr. Das was undaunted. He faced the situation with indomitable courage and led his party from victory so that, when the Swarajists held their first conference in Calcutta,

in the first week of September 1924, they were hailed of the most popular and powerful political party in the country.

And what was the result of the Swarajists' hold on the people? The Government were determined to crush the new party. They resorted to repression, passed the Bengal Ordinance, and arrested over seventy men, mostly belonging to the Swarajya Party. There were persistent rumours of the Government's intention to strike down the tallest in the field, if there was but the slightest indication of a widening rift in the Congress lute. But the situation was saved by the Mahatma who, sensing danger, entered into a pact with Mr. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru in spite of his differences with them. Criticising that pact, a keen-witted non-co-operater said: "Compromise implied give and take. But all the giving must be by Gandhi while all the taking by Mr. Das." And at the Belgaum Congress, which was presided over by the Mahatma, attempts were made to bring the two wings of the Congress nearer to each other.

A few months after the Belgaum session, his health having been shattered, Mr. Das hastened to Patna to recuperate it but by the middle of March he was again required in Calcutta at the Council meeting. Mr. Das had to go to the Council on a stretcher. His presence foiled the plans of the Government for giving a fresh lease of life to dyarchy.

After burying dyarchy full five fathoms deep, Mr. Das, with laurels on his brow, went back to Patna. The failure of dyarchy in several provinces and its complete collapse in C.P., the minority report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee, the clamour of Europeans in India for better understanding with the Swarajists, the gestures of Lord Birkenhead and his own convictions, wrought a change in Mr. Das's mind. He hurled a surprise at the world by speaking from the presidential chair of the Faridpur conference, of his deire for co-operation on 'honourable terms' and of his love for village reconstruction. His Faridpur address had since come to be regarded as his last political testament. He left Faridpur for Darjeeling, and the fatal end to his life came too suddenly when he was looking for a united Congress and dreaming of Swaraj.

Warm sentiments and generous impulses, forensic abilities and remarkable powers of eloquence, dauntless courage and dynamic energy, untiring advocacy of a cause and unflagging

devotion to the motherland, gift for organisation and consummate ability in the management of men, nearness to the heart of the poor and a touch of imagination 'that gives wings to one's purposes and range to one's vision', and above all, his unrivalled sacrifices had raised Mr. Das to a pedestal next only to the Mahatma's in the affections of his countrymen. His was an imposing figure, slightly suggestive of Napoleon like whom he too met his Waterloos but remained proud. Chittaranjan was really 'one of those men whose vision covered the whole horizon and whose feet filled the whole earth'. There was no niggardliness in his composition. He did not know what it was to be economical or calculating. "When he earned he would give, when he ceased to earn he would borrow". His charities were as varied as they were numerous; he indeed delighted in getting rid of money. In his case, magnanimity bordered on weakness. Did he not pay his barber in a railway journey ten rupees for a shave and, when asked why he committed such an indiscretion, did he not make the characteristic observation that it was a trifle to him a fortune to the barber ?

This kind of extravagance often involved him in scrapes. But he always dared and never grudged the throe. He found joy in facing opposition rather than in overcoming it. He was a born fighter, if there was ever one. And to him what really mattered was the end not the means. If he was a terror to his opponents, he was no less a terror to his friends and partymen. As the leader of the Swarajya Party, he was an autocrat. Constitutional procedure was for the common folk, not for him and Motilal ! His habitual generosity forsook him in conflict and if any one stood in his way he merely smashed him. And yet in his last days there was in him a certain mellowness which responded to the secret melodies of an unknown 'maya'.

If he lived longer, the story of Bengal would have been possibly different. And though he died comparatively early in his middle fifties, he left behind him the unfading memory of a patriot who completely effaced himself in the pursuit of his country's freedom and his own life's mission. There was in him an extraordinary combination of the revolutionary's reckless disregard of consequences, of something of the Lokamanya's political acumen and strategy and not a little of the Mahatma's idealism and spirit of renunciation.

'If Gokhale set the example of selfless service for the sake of the Motherland, if Gandhiji gave a new orientation to the philosophy of patriotism and raised it to the level of religion, Mr. Das bequeathed to the land an example of sacrifice which never wilts from human memory'. And there was indeed something distinctive in his contribution to India's evolution as a nation : he was the link and linchpin between Aurobindo, the prophet of Nationalism and Gandhi, the Apostle of Freedom.

24

C.R. DASS : TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF A GREAT PATRIOT

SUCHETA KRIPALANI

The total span of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's active political life did not exceed more than six years, but such was his genius and impact of his forceful personality on the political life of the country that within this short time he became one of the outstanding leaders and statesmen of our nation.

His charismatic personality, the drama of his life, his remunciation of a life of luxury and affluence for one of hardship and poverty in the service of the nation, his kindness and large hearted generosity, all these endeared him to the people. He was not only an idol of the Bengalis but of the entire country. The people in admiration and affection gave him the title of 'Deshbandhu'. He truly played the role of a 'Deshbandhu'.

METEORIC RISE

But this meteoric rise of Deshbandhu should not surprise us when we recall his earlier years. They were in a way a preparation for the great role he was to play in Indian politics. Even as a student he showed income love for his motherland and his desire to see it independent. He had gone to England to compete in the Indian Civil Services examination but by the time he sat for the examination in 1883, he had so involved himself in politics that he attracted adverse attion of the bureaucrats of the Indian Office.

In the British General Election of 1892 one of the burning

issues was that of Indian Home Rule, supported by the Liberal Party and bitterly opposed by the Conservatives. Young Chittaranjan threw himself headlong into the election campaign delivering fiery speeches in support of the Liberal candidates. This naturally did not go unnoticed by the bosses of the India Office. They decided that he would not be a fit representative of the British administration in India.

When the ICS results were declared, it was found that in selecting the candidates the list stopped with the name one just above his. Chitaranjan who had expected to do very well in the examination was not selected. His father Bhuvan Mohan, a well-known lawyer of Calcutta asked his friend, Sir Richard Garth, the retired Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court to inter-cede on behalf of his son. He tried but failed. He wrote back to Bhuvan Mohan. "I tried my best but your son's Oldham speech spoilt everything. I could not convince India Office." Chittaranjan, therefore, gave up the idea of becoming a civil servant and was called to the Bar in 1893. On his return he set up a practice as an Advocate in the Calcutta High Court.

FILIAL DUTY

In his early age, another remarkable incident showed his high sense of responsibility, adherence to truth, loyality to and respect for his father. His father, Bhuvan Mohan was somewhat of a spendthrift and careless about his financial affairs. Soon after Chittaranjan had started his practice, creditors pressed on his father and would not agree to a postponement, of payment unless Chittaranjan was also a signatory to the promissory notes.

Thus, at a very young age he agreed to take up the heavy burden of his father's debts, because he thought that he was honour bound to do so. At one stage stable to meet the demands of all his creditors they sought the protection of the court and got themselves declared as insolvents. But within a few years Chittaranjan cleared these debts one by one even sometimes under great difficulty. His father, on his deathbed, knew that finally all his debts had been cleared and he was completely discharged of his obligations. Such a remarkable sense of duty and honour is rare to find.

DEDICATION TO CAUSE

In his profession, after a few initial years of struggle, he rose quickly. He made his name in political cases many of which were unpaid, labour of love on his side. The first important case which he defended was in 1907 the *Vande-mataram* case against Aurobindo. Bipin Chandra Pal was prosecuted for contempt of court as he had refused to answer questions in the Court and as a consequence served a six months' prison sentence, but Aurobindo was acquitted for want of evidence.

The next Aurobindo case gained Chittaranjan great fame and eminence. This case was known as the 'Alipur Bomb Case' where Aurobindo and 35 young men were involved for "conspiring to wage a war against the Government". The proceedings of the case attracted India-wide attention. Chittaranjan's performance was sureb. He got Aurobindo and most of his companions acquitted. The concluding address was not merely the pleading of an able lawyer but every word expreassed the eloquent fervour of an intense patriot. He concluded thus :

> "My appeal to you is this controversy will, be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil this agitation would be ceased, long after he is dead and gone he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism as the prophet of nationalism and lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words would echo and re-echo not only in India but across the distant seas."

During this case he, of course, could not be paid, neither had he the time to take up other cases. So his income became nil but he struggled for months defending his clients. In the meanwhile he had to sell his property, his carriage went, his wife's jewellery followed. Such was his complete dedication to the national cause.

TURNING POINT

The Alipur Bomb case was the turning point in his career. With this case he arrived at the top of his profession and cases flowed to him in large numbers. Not only did he become a well-known criminal laywer but he made his name on the Civil side in

the famous Damraon Succession case.

Chittarnjan earned a grand income so also did he give with large hearted generosity. He was generous to a fault; some-times quite undeserving people took advantage of his kind heart. He lived also in grand style. All this left little in his hands to save for the adverse day when he threw in his lot with the Non-Cooperation movement and gave up his lucrative practice. He also had to spend for the political work of organising the party, travelling about as he virtuality took charge of the whole of the Eastern region. As a result he had to suffer great financial hardship. With his death his widow. Basanti Devi, who was a true companion to him in his political life found that very little was left for her maintenance.

DIFFERENCES WITH GANDHIJI

There was a political ferment in Bengal during the 1920 Civil Disobedience movement. More than 16,000 people found themselves in jail. Chittaranjan gave all his time to the movement, organising, moving about and inspiring the people with his stirring speeches. In one of his messages he said, 'I feel the handcuffs on my wrist and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The Congress work has to be carried on. What matters if I am taken or left ? What matters if I am dead or alive." He was soon arrested (December 1921).

While he was in jail Gandhiji suddenly called off the movement because of the Chouri Choura incident Chittaranjan and many other leaders did not approve of this unexpected halt when the movement had gathered momentum. While in jail he had time to think and assess the situation. He came to the conclusion that another front should be opened for fighting the Government. namely, the legislature front. He became the sponsor of the Council Entry Programme and along with Motilalji, founded the Swaraj Party within the Congress.

His opening gambit for this move came at the Gaya Congress in December 1922. In his address, he pleaded his case with all the eloquence he could command but he was not able to convert many. A handful delegates were won over to his view. Gandhiji and Chittaranjan's ways parted for the time being, The Swarajists argued that they wanted to enter the Council "for the sole purpose

of causing uniform, cantinuous, constant obstruction."

During the ensuring elections Swarajists did very well, Motilalji and Chittaranjan Das played their respective role in the Central Assembly and the Bengal Council as leaders of the Swarajya, Party/Chittaranjan decided to fight a Bengal Council seat and organise the State party. For the time being this helped to keep up the morale of the people which invariably flags in the full period between the *Satyagrahas*. But after a while, the Council entry programme too came to a dead end; protests and walkouts, etc. did not enthuse the people any more. That was the time when they again turned to Gandhiji for his leadership.

THEN AND NOW

Though, Chittaranjan and Gandhiji had gone their separate ways yet, their respect and love for each other had never diminished. Both in their own ways continued to work loyally for the Congress and for the freedom of the country. That is the difference between the politics of that time and of today. Today, we revile and suspect each other and question each other's motives because very often they are not clear and free from the taint of self seeking as in the case of Chittaranjan Das or Gandhiji.

These two great leaders again came close to each other during the Belgaum Congress in 1924 Chittaranjan Das then invited Gandhiji to tour Bengal to propagate his Constructive Programme to which Gandhiji was then devoting all his time. During this tour the bond of affection between these two increased greatly, particularly as Gandhiji spent some days with him at Darjeeling where Chittaranjan had gone to recouperate his health staying as the guest of his friend, Sir N.N. Sircar in his house "Step Aside". Gandhiji later in a nostalgic vein refers to these happy days thus : "When I left Darjeeling I left much more that I had ever thought before. There was no end of my affection for Deshbandhu and my warm feeling for such a great soul."

Chittaranjan did not recover, all of a student his condition deteriorated and death came on 16-6-1925. The news of his death came as a great blow to Gandhiji who had left Chittaranjan only a few days earlier. Speaking at a condolence meeting he said. "Chittaranjan was a fearless fighter of freedom of the country . . . who else could pioneer such a bold effort to build up the country and

the Nation as Chittaranjan could do ? He never found anywhere in the country any feeling of difference between the Hindus and the Muslims and I could even state that Chitaranjan had also no harred not any grudge for the British people. What he wanted was the independence of the country . . ."

"Chittaranjan is no more but his immortal soul will remain with us. Let his memory be with us and let his activities inspire us for the generations to come".

Chittaranjan was not only a statesman and a great political leader of his time but also a good litterateur, a poet and a deeply religious man a, 'Bhakta'. His lyrical poems and songs speak of his abiding faith in God and his love of God. He could spend hours in his home singing and listening to 'Kirtans' and 'Bhajans'. We, therefore, pay homage to Chittaranjan not only as maker of modern India, a revolutionary, a patriot, a literary man and above all a humanist. He was truly a man of many splendoured personality.

25

CHITARANJAN DAS : A HERO OF HUNDRED BATTLES

M.K. GANDHI

A giant among men has fallen. Bengal is like a widow today. A critic of the Deshbandhu remarked to me some weeks ago, 'find fault with him, it is true, but I must candidly confess to you that we have absolutely no one to replace him.' When I related the anecdote at the meeting at Khulna where I first heard the slunning news, Acharya Roy exclaimed, "It is but too true. If I could tell who can take Rabindranath's place as a poet, I could tell you who can take Deshbandhu's as a leader. There is no man in Bengal even anywhere near Deshbandhu." He was a hero of a hundred battles. He was generous to a fault. Though he earned lacs of rupees from his practice, he never permitted himself to be ıich. And even gave up the mansion he had.

I came to know him personally for the first time in 1919 in connection with the Punjab Congress Inquiry Committee. I approached our meeting with suspicion and awe. I had heard from a distance of his roaring practice and his still more roaring eloquence. He had come with his motor car and with his wife and family and was living like a prince. My first experience was none too happy. We had met to consider the question of leading evidence before the Hunter inquiry. I found in him all the legal subtleties and a lawyer's keen desire to 'floor' witnesses by cross-examination and to expose the many wickednesses of the Martial Law administration. My own purpose was to do

something different. I reasoned. The second interview put me at rest and dispelled all my fears. He was all reasonableness and gave a willing ear to all I said. It was my first intimate contact with so many public man in India. We knew one another from a distance. I had taken practically no part in Congress affairs. They merely knew me as a South African warrior. But all my colleagues at once made me feel at home with them, none more so than this illustrious servant of India. I was supposed to be the Chairman of the Committee. 'I shall say my say on points wherein we may differ, but I give you my assurance that I shall yield to your judgment.' We had come near enough, before this assurance was volunteered, to embolden me to discover previous suspicious to him. So when he gave the assurance I felt proud of a comrade so loyal but at the same time I felt a little humiliated; because I knew that I was a mere novice in India politics and hardly entitled to such implicit trust. But discipline knows no rank. A king who knows its value submits to his page in matters where he appoints him as the sole judge. I occupied a place analogous to that of the page. And I record it with grateful pride that among all the loyal colleagues had the privilege of being associated with, none was more loyal than Chittaranjan Das.

At the Amritsar Congress I could no longer claim the rights of discipline. There we were warriors, each holding in trust the welfare of the nation according to his ability. Here there was to be no yielding but to pure reason or party exigencies. It was a perfect treat for me to put up my first fight on a Congress platform. All courteous, all equally unyielding; the great Malaviyaji trying to hold the balance evenly, now pleading with one and now with the other. The President of the Congress, Pandit Motilalji, thought the game was all over. I had a rare time between Lokamanya and Deshbandhu. They had a common formula for the Reforms resolution. Each party wanted to convince he other. But there was no conviction. There was a stalemate and a tragedy behind as many thought. The Ali Brothers whom I know and loved, but, did not know as I do now, pleaded with me for Deshbandhu's resolution. 'You must not undo,' said Mahomed All with his persuasive humility, 'the great work you have done in the inquiry.' But I was unconvinced. Jairamdas, that cool-headed Sindhi, came to the rescue. He passed me a slip containing his suggestion and pleading for a compromise. I

hardly knew him. Something in his eyes and face captivated me. I read the suggestion. It was good. I passed it on to Deshbandhu, 'Yes, if my party will accept it' was his reply. Mark the loyalty again ! He must placate his party—one secret of his wonderful hold on his people. It passed muster. Lokamanya with his eagle eyes was watching what was transpiring. Pandit Malaviyaji's Gangetic stream was pouring from the rostrum—his one eye looking towards the dais where we manikins were deciding a nation's fate. Lokamanya said, 'I don't want to see it, if Das has approved, it is good enough for me.' Malaviyaji overheard it, snatched the paper from my hands and amid deafening cheers announced that a compromise had been arrived at. I have given a detailed description of the incident because it epitomizes the reasons of Deshbandhu's greatness and unquestioned leadership, firmness in action, reasonableness in judgment and loyalty to party.

I must pass on. We come to Juhu, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Darjeeling. At Juhu he and Motilalji came to convert me. They had become twins. We had different view-points. But they could not brook any difference with me. Could they do so they would go fifty miles if I wanted them to go only twenty-five. But they would not surrender an inch even to the dearest friend where the country's interest was at stake. We had a kind of compromise. We were unsatisfied, but not in despair. We were out to conquer one another. We met at Ahmedabad. Deshbandhu was in his element, watching everything as a tactician would. He gave me a splended defeat. How many such defeats I would not have at the hands of friends like him now alas ! no more in body. Let no one consider that we had become enemies because of the Saha resolution. We believed each other to be in the wrong. But it was a difference between lovers. Let faithful husbands and wives recall scenes of their sacred differences and in their differences giving themselves pain in order to heighten the pleasure of a re-union. Such was our condition. So we must meet again at Delhi, the polished Pandit with his terrible jaws, the docile Das in spite of the exterior which to a passing onlooker might appear rough. The skeleton of the pact was made and approved there. It was an indissoluble bond which one party has now sealed with death.

26

DESHBANDHU AND GANDHIJI*

SANKAR PRASAD MITRA

Deshbandhu had seen in active politics roughly for eight years from April 1917 till his death on the 16th June 1925. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any other political leader in world's history who, within these short span of years, by reason of high intellect, utmost sincerity, intense devotion to the cause he had championed and unparalleled sacrifice of earthly possessions, had reached the peak of power and glory and had won the hearts of millions in a vast subcontinent. True, he has interested in politics, had sympathies for revolutionaries and was a person with a remarkably philanthropic bent of mind since his early days; but he did not fully enter the arena of politics till 1917. During these years, it is well-known, he had numerous differences of opinion with Mahatma Gandhi. Deshbandhu, for instance, was sadly disappointed when Gandhiji called off the non-co-operation movement in 1922 owing to the incidents at Chaurichaura. In a speech at Madras in June 1923 he said : "I myself led people to prison. I sent my son first to jail. My son was followed by my wife, and then I went to prison. I knew that the spirit of resistance that manifested itself was mighty and the proudest Government did bend to it. Gandhi bungled it, and mismanaged it. Now he turns round and asks the people to spin and do the work of Charka alone. . . ."

We know also how sharp his differences with Gandhiji were

*Written on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.

on the question of 'Council entry' which led to the formation of the Swarajya Party and Gandhiji's virtual retirement from politics for some time. But it is equally known that Gandhiji had ultimately won him over and later on, unequivocally he accepted the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in our national struggle.

When we celebrate, therefore, the birth centenary of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, it is worth while emphasising some of the fundamental tenets which both of them had accepted and which future generations would no well to remember if they had any intention of rendering true service to our people. Both of them believed in total identification physically, mentally and spiritually with the poorest of the poor. Both of them believed in the purity of Means and End. Both of them believed in a mass movement for achieving independence. Both of them believed in a decentralised administration of independent India to ensure complete freedom to the people of the country—political, economic, mental, vital and spiritual.

Let us try to illustrate these basic points of agreement between two of the foremost leaders the Indian national movement had created. It is common knowledge that Chittaranjan Das gave up a princely practice at the Calcutta bar to devote himself wholeheartedly to political life in accordance with the Nagpur Resolution of the Indian National Congress held at the end of 1920. He returned practically all his briefs and not even the most fabulous fee could persuade him to accept a brief till the last day of his life. On the 10th December 1921 when he was arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and was being taken away, he asked his daughters not to send any food from home as he intended, in prison, to take the same food as was served to the other prisoners. Indeed, he gave up all material comforts and pleasures to convince his followers and the people of his country whom he was bent upon liberating from imperialist yoke that he was a true servant of his enchained Motherland and continuously insisted on facing poverty and denial of standards of living not enjoyed by the masses.

It is, indeed, interesting to compare Deshbandu's life of sacrifice with one of Mahatma Gandhi's primary articles of faith. Gandhiji said : "When I found myself down into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me, in order to remain untouched by immorality, by untruth, by what is known as political

gain. I came definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was a witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possession." (See Tendulkar's life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. III, p. 155).

Like Deshbandhu Gandhiji firmly believed that a person should enter into public life not for self-aggrandisement or for attainment or enjoyment of political power and privilege and material benefits concomitant thereto but for selfless service to the nation and to humanity. In Mahatma Gandhi's eyes political philosophy and moral philosophy were indistinguishable. That is why, he repeatedly asserted that he had made the working man's cause his own and became a solialist long before any of the young communists were born. He boldly asserted that his claim as a socialist would live when the socialism of those who vociferously preached the socialist doctrine on every conceivable occasion was dead (vide issues of the *Harijan* on March 26, 1931 and on August 4, 1946).

Indeed, he made fun at those who propagated the socialist doctrine without leading the life of a true socialist. He said : "Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the same when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it is game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us. Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicities of zeros will produce zero values. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste. . . .Only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialist society in India and the world." (Vide Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. II, pages 140 to 141).

The principal lesson to be learnt from Mahatma Gandhi's public career is the lesson of a ceaseless struggle for consistency between words and deeds. And it is this attitude towards life which prompted him on the 1st May, 1925 to pay glowing tributes to the sacrifices of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in these words : "I cannot easily conceive of such stupendous sacrifice of everything one may call one's own. Indeed the climax was reached when he

made a 'Trust', for the remnants of his earthly gains, but that too was not the last."

Let us now come to purity of Means and End. That this was the *esprit de corps* of Gandhian teaching needs no repetition. He had always stated that Means and End were convertible terms in his philosophy of life. (Vide 'Young India' dt. December 26, 1924, p. 424).

It is this faith in the purity of Means and End that induced Mahatma Gandhi to accept the creed of non-violence. Indeed, when the atom bomb exploded on Hiroshima unleashing unpre cedented destruction, Mahatma Gandhi was not perturbed. With philosophical calm and quietude he said : "Man knows that only evil can come out of evil as good out of good. . . .The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the atom bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to go out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as depth of hatred. . . ." (Vide Tendulkar's Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VII, pages 171 to 173).

Whatever Deshbandhu's views on the question of 'violence *versus* non-violence' may have been in the beginning, there can be no doubt that he was fully converted by Mahatma Gandhi at any rate towards the end of his life. In his presidential address to the Gaya Congress in December 1922, Deshbandhu categorically observed : "Doubt has, however, been expressed in some quarters about the soundness of the principle of non-violence. I cannot refuse to acknowledge that there is a body of Indian opinion within the country as well as outside according to which non-violence is an ideal abstraction incapable of realisation and that the only way in which Swaraj can ever be attained is by the application of force and violence. I do not for a moment question the courage, sacrific and patriotism of those who hold this view. I know that some of them have suffered for the cause which they believe to be true. But may I be permitted to point out that, apart from any question of principle, history has proved over and over again the utter futility of revolutions brought about by force and violence. I am one of those who hold to non-violence on principle. But let us consider the question of expediency. Is it possible to attain Swaraj by violent means ? The answer which history gives

is an emphatic 'No'. Take all the formidable revolutions of the world. . . . I maintain that no people has yet succeeded in winning freedom by force and violence. The truth is that love of power is a formidable factor to be reckoned with, and those who secure that power by violence will retain that power by violence. The use of violence degenerates them who use it, and it is not easy for them, having seized the power, to surrender it. And they find it easier to carry on the work of their predecessor, retaining their power in their own hands. Non-violence does not carry with it that degeneration which inherent in the use of violence.".

Mahatma Gandhi's reading of world history was indentical with that of Deshbandhu. Gandhiji had no doubt that the teaching of world history was that those who had, even with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them, had in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered. This is precisely why he became a humble explorer of the science of non-violence.

Now, even the severest critics of Mahatma Gandhi admit that he it was, who created in the world the most gigantic mass movement for national liberation the world had ever witnessed. Deshbandhu also in his presidential address to the Gaya Congress expressed his conviction that the labour and the peasantry of India were more eager to attain Swaraj than the so-called middle and educated classes. And their co-operation and active participation in the struggle for Swaraj were essential. In his view there was no difference between the work of attaining Swaraj and the work of finding bread for the poor or securing justice to the class of people who were engaged in a particular trade or occupation.

Gandhiji and Deshbandhu had also similar views on the future constitution of independent India. Gandhiji, it is well-known, was a believer in village autonomy and decentralisation of political, economic and administrative power. Mahatma Gandhi's conception of "Panchayet Raj" or "Gram Swaraj" or "Sarvodaya" need not be elaborately discussed in this article. Deshbandhu too in his presidential address to the Gaya Congress in December 1922 had placed before the country in the clearest possible terms the constitutional structure that he envisaged for a free India.

We have carried on our experiments with a constitution based principally on the Government of India Act of 1935 and various other provisions found in other democratic constitution of the

world, that came into force on the 26th January 1950. Numerous amendments to that constitution have been enacted from time to time to meet the changing needs of society and to answer the national problem that arose at different stages. On the occasion of the birth centenary of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who was not only one of our most outstanding national leaders who had studied deeply the history of India throughout the ages with a view to grasp the true urges and aspirations of the Indian masses, but also a legal genius of the highest order, it might be fruitful to recall his views on India's future administration. At the Gaya Congress Deshbandhu declared : "The foundation of real democracy must be laid in small centres—not gradual decentralisation which implies a previous centralisation—but a gradual integration of practically autonomous small centres into one living harmonious whole." He also said : "I am firmly convinced that a parliamentary government is not a government by the people and for the people. Many of us believe that the middle class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If today the British parliament grants provincial autonomy to the provinces with responsibility to the Central Government I, for one will protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class. I do not believe that the middle class will then part with their power. How will it profit India, if in place of the white bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian bureaucracy of the middle class ? Bureaucracy is bureaucracy and I believe that the very idea of Swaraj is inconsistent with the existence of a bureaucracy. My ideal of Swaraj will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate with us in its attainment. Any other attempt will inevitably lead to what European Socialists call the "bourgeois" government. In France and in England and in other European countries it is the middle class who fought the battle of freedom and the result was that power was still in the hands of this class. Having usurped the power they are unwilling to part with it. If today the whole of Europe is engaged in a battle of real freedom it is because the nations of Europe are gathering their strength to wrest this power from the hands of the middle class. I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world—Swaraj by non-violence and

Swaraj by the people.

"To me the organisation of village life and the practical autonomy of small ideal centres are more important than either provincial antonomy or central responsibility and if the choice lay between the two, I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local centres. I must not be understood as implying that the village centres will be disconnected units. They must be held together by a system of co-operation and integration. For the present, there must be power in the hands of the provincial Government and the Indian Government; but the ideal should be accepted once for all that the proper function of the central authority, whether in the Provincial or in the Indian Government is to advise, having a residuary power of control only in case of need, and to be exercised under proper safeguards. I maintain that real Swaraj can only be attained by vesting the power of government in these local centres and I suggest that the Congress should appoint a committee to draw up a scheme of government which would be acceptable to the nation."

Let us pause and ponder over the history of India since 1947 for a proper appreciation of these prophetic utterances of one of the greatest men our country had the good fortune to produce. If our desire is to usher in a society freed of exploitation, autocracy and coercion, of separatist or secessionist propensities and of inefficiency and corruption we would be well-advised to derive our inspiration and guidance from the vision of a free India which leaders like Gandhiji and Deshbandhu had presented to us.

I have already observed that the two leaders had their differences; but those differences gradually brought them together and Deshbandhu ultimately became one of the ardent followers and staunch supporters of Mahatma Gandhi. At the Gaya Session of the Congress he paid his tributes to Gandhiji in these words : "Great in taking decisions, great in executing them, Mahatma Gandhi was incomparably great in the last stand which he took on behalf of his country. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest men that the world has ever seen. The world hath need of him, and if he is moeked and jeered at by 'people of importance', 'people with a stake in the country'—Scribes and Pharisees of the days of Christ—he will be gratefully remembered, now and always by a nation which he led from victory to victory."

In May 1925, Mahatma Gandhi was invited by him to preside

over the Faridpur Political Conference. Welcoming Gandhiji to the Presidential chair Deshbandhu said: "I have been your follower from the beginning of the non-cooperation movement and I am still your follower and co-worker. It is not for me to sing your praise here. It is for the world and I feel sure that the world will listen to you as India is listening today. We want your inspiration and guidance. . . .it is impossible for India to do without your guidance today and at any time. May God guide us and inspire us till Swaraj is attained."

Gandhiji and Deshbandhu are immortal in our history. They both represented all that was best in the East and in the West. They have given to us a philosophy of life which can be truly described as India's contribution to world culture. They were both determined to achieve our freedom depending on our own strength. They both dreamt of an independent India in which every citizen would enjoy the basic necessities of life including the right to work and earn a living and in which every citizen would be entitled to the complete freedom of thought and conscience Indeed, both of them were the living embodiments of India's yearning for liberation not merely from foreign yoke but also from the bondage of all that was dross—from the encrustations of countries, so that the soul of India might shine resplendent in its full and innate glory. Let us hope and pray that future generations would never forget them and would never fail to be guided by their inspiring examples.

I am convinced that if he had not died a premature death, he would have created a new atmosphere in the country. It is a matter for regret that after he died, some of his followers assailed his position and his declaration was repudiated. The result was that the Muslims of Bengal moved away from the Congress and the first seeds of partition were sown.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

27

DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS

GANESH GHOSH

An Indian mythological story says that Maharaja Harishchandra of Baranashi had given away his entire kingdom to some one who had craved for it; and future, later, had sold himself, his queen and his son and had also given away the entire money so obtained to the same person who had received the earlier gift, as a show of honour and regard to him.

Undoubtedly, this example set by King Harishchandra was a very high and sublime one and people of all ages and of all countries will hold this up as a sureme and noblest example of sacrifice.

The recorded history of India also mentions of a case which says that Crown Prince Gautam of Kapilavastu, a small kingdome in the North-Western part of India, feeling very much worried and concerned about the ultimate result of human beings, one day left the place and went away to the solitude and quietness of the forest to seek for the ultimate liberty of the human soul. Prince Gautam never came back to claim his throne.

It goes without saying that Prince Gautam had also set a very high example of sacrifice and renunciation and people all over the world has during the last two thousand and five hundred years held this up with great respect and admiration as a very high example of renunciation.

But this also speaks of an event which had taken place much more than two thousand years back. Yet, there is an incident almost similar to the above ones which had taken place in this

very land of ours, in Bengal, and also in our time, more precisely during these present days. Chittaranjan Das was a very wealthy person and in reality was a multi-millionaire. There were many stories, some true, some half-true, some baseless and absured ones, current amongst the people of Bengal during his time which tried to give an inkling into the immense wealth and riches he possessed. This very person Chittaranjan Das one day gave away all his wealth, his entire property and his total money in the service of the people of our country. His luxurious home at Bhowanipur, Calcutta, is a hospital now for the common people of our country.

This wonderful high example of sacrifice, seemingly unnatural and even unbelievable for the present days, was in reality set by Chittaranjan Das himself; but the decision to renounce everything he possessed did not appear in Chittaranjan's mind one day all on a sudden as had perhaps happened in the two cases cited above of our earlier times. The entire life history of Chittaranjan Das, though undoubtedly of a short life span, was behind this decision of him for his sublime sacrifice.

28

WE REMEMBER DESHBANDHU DAS

ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

We are celebrating this day the 5th November 1976 as a birthday of India's great noble leader.

Bengal had many great political leaders, revolutionaries, social reformes and great men in many other fields. But perhaps, Chittranjan Das was not only great as a leader of ability and foresight—but also great as a man in real sense. In greatness of heart and in having a genuine human sense and sympathy, the nearest approach to him, we could find only in Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Even then, there ia a qualitative difference. In Vidyasagar's life there was a continuous flow of milk of kindness and human feeling —but without any sudden Buddha-like renunciation,—as we have seen in the life of Chittaranjan.

Chittaranjan, the prince of the Calcutta Bar, was earning thousands every day and was spending thousands every day. He was living a life of ease and luxury and he would help his friends and others to live in comfort. Very often, like Vidyasagar—he would render financial aid to any supplicant without examining the genuineness of the case. He might continue that way till the end of his life—but for a sudden inspiration.

In Calcutta Special Session of the Congress in September 1920, all the Bengal nationalist leaders, Bepin Pal, B. Chakraborty and their juniors were opposed to Gandhis' non-co-operation resolution in toto. But Das agreed to all items like the boycott of courts and legal practice, educational institutions of the government, etc.; but he opposed only one item—the boycott of legislatures. Election to the new Council took place in November; as a

loyal Congressman, Das with his followers did not praticipate in election. Then came the regular annual session of the Congress at Nagupur on the last 3 days of 1920. Gandhi, as a leader. was shrewd but also generous. He knew that without the help and leadership of Das, he could not expect a real mass movement in Bengal. He saw that Das differed from him only about the boycott of legislatures. Election being already over, that point had no relevance until about the end of 1923. He readily agreed to drop all reference to boycott of legislatures and resignation of elected members. This was practical politics; those, who had contested and won election in defiance of the Congress resolution, could hardly be expected to resign. Similarly, Gandhi made certain adjustments in the resolution regarding education to win over Lala Lajpatrai without whose leadership it would be defficult to create mass enthusiasm in the Punjab.

Many leaders accepted Gandhi's programme but none made such unprecedented renunciation as Chittaranjan did. So long living a life of ease and comfort, Das suddenly reduced his life to a status comparable only to that of Prince Gautam—leaving one night his palace, sleeping wife and little son. At Nagpur in one day, the prince became the *fakir*; life of luxury yielded place to complete renunciation and austerity.

The writer had the opportunity to see many eminent leaders of the non-co-operation movement; but few could be said to have taken the programme of service so seriously and so meticulously. Drinking he gave up; smoking he gave up; indeed, he gave up even many common amenities of life. In spite of such princely income, he had hardly any savings left. We know while walking in moffussil areas, he often felt tired and would say, "Oh, what a relief it would be to have a puff of a cigar or of a *gargara*." His companions would suggest—"Why not smoke a cigar ?" Sharply he would say, "No, what I have given up, I have given up for good."

He would not brook the idea of even the slightest deviation from the vow he had taken in the secrets of his mind. Other leaders also were great and good but not like Deshbandhu, so strict in the observance of his vow. He had no public commitment that he would not smoke ; other eminent leaders smoked publicly. There were other who would drink—in moderate doses regularly, But, Chittaranjan would not. Nagpur settled the issue for him for

life and he would forego all comfort even to the point of endangering his health. Overnight, Mr. C. R. Das, the leader of the Calcutta bar, had returned to Calcutta as Deshbandhu Das. Here lay his uniqueness. and perhaps knowingly, he hastened his death at 55. In his death Bengal and India lost a leader—but gathered a spiritual heritage of a glorious life as of an ancient Indian Rishi.

When the non-co-operation movement was gathering momentum, he was not satisfied with the progress. He felt he had no moral right to ask others to defy law and court arrest, before he made his dearest and nearest ones do so. So when his dear consort, Basanti Devi offered to court arrest, his joy knew no bounds. Basanti Devi with Deshbandhu's sister Urmila Devi and another girl went out on the streets of Calcutta as hawkers of Khaddar. But that white piece of cloth was a red rag to the British bull. Large contingents of police, European and Indian, came out to arrest them. Indian constables were on the point of resigning ; but Basanti Devi dissuaded them ; she advised them to wait for the call of the Congress.

The whole of Calcutta seemed to have been set on fire. From the common man of the street earning his bread by his day's labour to the highest, the great aristrocrats of Calcutta—all felt shocked. Even known loyalists like Lord Sinha. Sir Ashutosh Chaudhury and other protested against the wife of Deshbandhu Das. S.N. Mullick, an ex-member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India left the Viceregal dinner table in protest. The busy life of Calcutta stood still; the share market closed its doors. All shops closed their doors. The Calcutta Bar condemned the arrest. The Government had a second thought over the matter and the ladies were discharged from police lock-up late in the evening. Bengal's contribution to the quota of Satyagrahis courting arrest was the highest; out of 60,000 person arrested through out India; Bengal sent 16,000 to jail.

Now let us skip over to another episode of December 1921, Das and Azad and other leaders of Bengal were in the Alipore Jail. Suddenly an emissary of Reading, the Viceroy, came to meet them. Reading thought he had successfully suppressed the Congress and the Prince of Wales might safely visit India. But he was greeteed everywhere with *hartal* and empty streets. Provincial governments tried to put up a show of warm reception but the

Prince was intelligent enough to realise the camouflage practised on him. He wrote to Reading in strong terms about their reception and added what a "b.f." (bloody fool) they had made of his Reading came to Calcutta. But anticipting his dismal failure, he had left Calcutta before the arrival of the Prince. Reading asked Malaviya to start some negotiation with Das; but Das told him, it was only Gandhi who could call off the movement.

After his release by the end of 1922, Das went to preside over the Gaya session of the Congress. It was then widely rumourd that the carried in his pocket two documents—his presidential address and his letter of resignation from the presidentship. The resignation was hastened by Rajagopalachari—pressing for a resolution in favour of council boycott. On that, Das submitted his resignation and formed the Swarajya Party. The A.I.C.C. did not accept his resignation. There was a middle or neutral group in the Congress trying for a compromise. Then came the special session of the Congress at Delhi in the later part of September 1923—which gave permission to the Swarajists to contest the next election to be held in November. Das, Motilal, Vithal Bhai and other pro-changers organised the election campaign within 2 months and achieved surprising success.

During the election campaign Das made frontal and direct charge against certain policies of Gandhi. He accused Gandhi of having bungled and mismanaged. Gandhi was still in jail. The success of the Swarajists enraged the government. They reacted by issuing an ordinance for Bengal—authorising detention without trial. The government charge was that the ordinance and the arrests were intended against the revival of violent revolutionary activities. A large number of congressmen were arrested including Subhas Bose, Satyen Mitra, Anil Baran Ray, Suren Ghose, Hari Kumar Chakrabotry and others. Das was then in very weak health and was convalescing in some hill station in Punjab. He rushed down to Calcutta and asked Gandhi, Motilal and other to come.

There, after seeing all the papers and hearing responsible persons, Gandhi was convinced that the ordinance and the arrests were directed against the Swaraj Party; the charge of the revival of violent groups was not true. He was also convinced that *agents provocatenurs* had been engaged to promote violence in politics. That brought about a complete understanding between Das and

Gandhi. It was then that Gandhi declared—"I shall cling to the bosom of the Swaraj Party as a child clings to the bosom of its mother". He forgot all the heat over the Gopinath Saha resolution in the Amedabad A.I.C.C. Session where having won by some marginal votes over Das, Gandhi had (then) declared "I am humbled and defeated".

Gandhi always realised the real greatness of Das—his passionate love for the rural people. Das set up a special organisation for rural upliftment. But his days of exit were fast approaching. His passionate and burning desire to do something with his growing physical weakness distressed him much. And on June 16, he left the mortal frame and returned to his creator. With Tagore, we may say—"You brought with you an immortal life. In your death, you have given that to us".

Das was a poet of no mean merit ; he was a devout *Vaishnava*; he had a powerful pen—both for political polemic and also for serious discourses. The writer cannot but deplore—that Bengal, nay India– has not shown the appreciation due to Das. Yet, he believes, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan will continue to shine as a beacon to future generations.

29

CHITTA RANJAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS, FAILURES AND UNREALIZED DREAMS

PRITHWIS CHANDRA RAY

Chitta Ranjan was a visionary, a dreamer, and apostle of revolt. Yet, in practical politics, he suffered many things and refused to move onwards in many matters. He had little sympathy with existing conventions of life or social or political institutions of any kind. In his private and domestic life, he was as strong a destroyer of social usages and conventions as he had constituted himself in the last years of his life an enemy of the Government established by law. Though born of Brahmo parents, he treated lightly certain cherished ideals and conventions that the Brahmo Samaj held dear and sacred. As we have noticed in a previous chapter, he wrote and published several poems in which he defied the orthodox cult of Brahmo theism and puritanism. In his habits of life he had marked out for himself new principles and laws of conduct. In a later period of his life, he returned to Hindu orthodoxy, but had cast to the winds its principal corner-stone—the caste system. Against the fundamental Hindu usage of marrying within one's own caste, he had married both his daughters to bridegrooms chosen from castes other than his own; and he got neither of these marriages registered, taking upon himself the risk of their validity being challenged in a Court of Law. Yet, in the *Sradh* ceremony of his parents and in his daughters' marriages, he had followed Hindu ritual to the letter. In fact, when he grew to mature age, he neither remained a Brahmo nor became a

Hindu, according to the current and accepted interpretation of the term.

He lived like a prince during the better part of his life, indulging in epicurean habits to the full; but when he turned his back upon this chapter of his life, he renounced them as probably no one in modern India has done. Even before he had turned over this new leaf, in his laborious days he had given away in charities, mostly indiscriminate, what he had earned by the sweat of his brow. Though living in the midst of a materialistic age he never acquired a love for money except as a mere instrument for the demonstration of his altruistic instincts.

Though all the various stages of his life, revolt marked him as his own; and he went on breaking with the zeal of an iconoclast all image and fetishes that came in his way, no matter whether religious, social or political. He represented in all his life and ideas the spirit of revolt, and of Prometheus unbound; and, when he became the evangelist of Indian traditionalism, he did so, not with a view to paying homage and worship to the ideas of a bygone and remote past, but with a view to breaking away from the bondage of the present, and demolishing the gods, fashions, and conventions of modern life. We have no doubt in our mind that he renounced his splendid practice at the Bar, not from the spirit of mere sacrifice, as he never loved money for money's sake, nor to make himself an example to others, but to turn his back on the beaten track of the law, which he had never regarded as a noble or inspiring profession.

In politics, he was not in love with any form of bureaucracy; nor had he much love for Western Parliamentary instituions either. He was a democrat, but he did not subscribe to the main shibboleths of modern democracies, and his whole temperament, by nature and training, was that of a great autorat who could bear no criticism nor forgive anyone who challenged his authority and position. He was a Vaishnav by spiritual affinity and culture, but he did not believe in the cult of static calm or spiritual resignation which is the very essence of Vaishnavism. He was a socialist, particularly in his academic sympathy with Marxian doctrines; but he did not move even his little fingre to destroy the permanent settlement of Bengal, a pernicious institution which has for nearly a century and a half stood effectively between Bengal and progress. Nor in his coquettings with Trade Unions, could he rise

above capitalistic influences and go in for a wholesale scheme of better conditions of life for all labouring classes, or for any scheme to put down sweated labour and sweated wages.

Chitta Ranjan had given his attention to journalism at various stages of his life, but not until his retirement from the Bar did he become a full-fledged editor of a newspaper. Just a few days before the general election of 1923, he had started *Forward* as the daily organ of his party. As the editor of this journal he was eminently successful in organizing the public opinion of Bengal in support of his own doctrines and ideals. As a propagandist journal, *Forward* more than fulfilled the expectations and hopes of its founder, yet it cannot be said that it ever attained the high standard and reputation which such journals as the *Sandhya*, the *Yugantar*, the *Atmasakti* and the *Bande Mataram* had succeeded in establishing for themselves nearly twenty years before as the messengers of the firey cross to young Bengal. But perhaps the times were different and he was not the absolute master in his own house.

Though he was gifted in a very hight measure with the powers of persuasion, he failed to reach the first rank of public speakers of Young India. Keshab Chandra Sen, Lal Mohan Ghose, Kali Churn Banurji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Banerjea might well be reckoned as heroes of a hundred platforms, and could any day hold their own against English or American orators of the front rank of this and the last century. Chitta Ranjan certainly spoke very well and with an earnestness and candour that almost bewitched his audience, but his oratory lacked the classical dignity and the rounded periods with which the eloquence of Burke and Chatham are associated on the one side, as well as the terse condensation, directness, and the simple phraseology of a Lord Rosebery or a Joseph Chamberlain on the other.

Intellectually he exhibited in all his later public activities an extraordinary subtlety and nimbleness, but he failed to apply his splendid gifts to any work of enduring good or benefit to his country. He had practically abandoned his devotion to literature as soon as he became a busy lawyer, and had ceased to contribute articles to the newspapers and reviews as he had done as a free-lance in the days of the *Bande Mataram*. Towards renaissance and spirituality in India he contributed very little to which

subsequent generations of Indians may look for inspiration. In this matter probably, Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose's contributions will be worked in the future for valuable one. Chitta Ranjan's whole time, from the date on which he suspended his practice in the Bar to the last day of his life, was absorbed in the task of laying truly and faithfully the foundation of his party and keeping bis flock together. He had little leisure to think of leaving behing him anything in the nature of a permanent landmark in art, politics, philosophy, or literature.

He was so impatient a reformer and so obsessed with an enthusiasm for destruction that he did not even shrink in 1921 from wrecking several hundreds of schools in Bengal, on the plea that they were training and preparing our young men for a life of clerical serfdom. But when he tried to establish an independent University at Dacca, and several schools all over Bengal for the propagation of what is known as "national education", his efforts met with conspicuous failure, and by 1922-23 the older schools which he had destroyed were again full and busy. A few days before his death he told a friend that "national education was unrealizable without a national system of Government, and the boycott of the University was about the weakest point in the new national propaganda". How thousands of young men, whose careers were wrecked by his inconsiderate zeal, wish today that he had awakened to this reality before he had set out on his work of destruction !

Even in his short career as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, he stood out more as an apostle of destruction than as a respecter of peesons and institutions. No doubt, he scotched dyarchy, but he was unable to put anything in its place. Not that he did not want to but he could not. And as a result he remained a destroyer, and could not become a builder, try as he might.

In his last speech to the Bengal Legislative Council he said :

> "My answer to those who ask why I want to destroy is this : I want to destroy because this rotten structure is occupying the place where a beautiful mansion may be erected. May I ask how you can put up a beautiful building without pulling down the rotten structure which had already occupied

the place ? You cannot. Therefore there is no sense in that criticism, destruction ! destruction ! We do not want to destroy. It is a gross libel on the Swarajist members to say that we want only to destroy. We want to destroy in order that we may be able to build up. If we want to obstruct, it is because we may get the opportunity of constructing. It is to my mind a principle as simple as it can be. Why is it so difficult for my friends to realize it ? I cannot make out. Why ! Look at the history of any country; look at the history of England ! This sort of thing has gone on there and no power has come to the people without this obstruction. It is a wicked and pernicious system. One thing was good for England because it brought freedom for the English people, but that very thing is bad in this country because it is the wicked Swarajists who apply it."

He completed his work of destruction, but did not live to see any work of construction seriously undertaken, nor could he lay the foundation of the "beautiful mansion" he had in mind. He made a bold attempt to raise a large sum of money for village reconstruction—to spread sanitation, supply pure drinking water, distribute free medicine and establish primary schools in rural areas. Unfortunately he failed to realize sufficient funds for the purpose, and, before his schemes could be put through, the hand of death had fallen on him. It must, however, be noticed here, that, as the head of the civic administration in Calcutta for nearly a year, he was able to induce the Corporation to establish primary schools, a good hospital and medical school at the eastern end of the city, and several health associations and depots in different quarters for the treatment of cholera, small-pox, malaria and kala-azar.

Nor as a visionary did Chitta Ranjan confine his mental outlook to a mere reconstruction of Indian life. He cast his eyes on the world abroad and conceived the idea of a Federation of Asia. In his inaugural address at Gaya, as the President of the Congress, he said :

"Even more important is the participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation. which I see in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement, which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has

given may or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic peoples. It is the union of the operessed nationalities of Asia. Is India to remain outside this union ? I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world, is destined to bring about world-peace. World-peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation on the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage."

All his life, before he was recognized as the stormy petrel of Indian unrest, he had cherished beautiful illusions, been obsessed with wonderful visions. and dreamt inspiring dreame. The solidarity of the Indian nation, based on a permanent Hindu-Moslem understanding, of which he had given an earnest of his enthusiasm in the famous Pact of December 1923, and the Federation of Asia remained to his last day unrealized dreams.

While not believing in any particular faith in his latter days, he rose above the sordid spirit of religiosity and communalism. He became a transcendentalist, and like Abu'l Fazl, he entered into the spirit of universal religious tolerance. Three centuries ago, in an inscription on a temple in Kashmir, Abu'l Fazl wrote thus :

"Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth.

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox; but the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller."

Inspised by a sentiment of this nature, Chitta Ranjan made some very serious attempts in his life, including the Pact of December 1923, to prove to both these communities that a change of heart was necessary for them to make a united India possible. Unfortunately for India, his dream never materialized, and, before twelve months had passed after his death, his famous Bengal Pact was abandoned both by the Hindus and by the Mahomedans as a mere scrap of paper.

As regards the Federation of India he could cherish it as a mere intellectual vision, the ultimate realization of which could not, and did not, enter into practical politics during his lifetime. In his last public utterance at Faridpore, he gave expression to his ideas on an Indian Federation in the following manner :

> "For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek. I seek a federation of the states of India : each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people : each bound to each in the common service of all : a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth."

But neither in his address at Faridpore nor in any other public utterance do we find Chitta Ranjan thrashing out this question at any length. Nowhere in his public speeches do we come across any programme for the construction of an eastern structure for the Indian Commonwealth in consonance with the aspirations of the people in British India on the one side, and the security of Indian principalities on the other. Nor do we find him anywherer offering any helpful criticism on the two schemes which had been placed before the country on this subject during his lifetime. Mr. Lionel Curtis's idea of building up a Federal Commonwealth in this country on the model of the United States, by dividing India into a large number of small, homogeneous, and antonomous provinces, at one time came perilously near to practical politics. At a later stage, Major Lugard's scheme of parcelling out India into a large number of independent and sovereign states under well-chosen Indian governors, or in other words, the extension of the system of tributary principalities throughout the country, engaged public attention seriously both in this country and England.[1]

The Federation of Man as a social Utopia never captured Chitta Ranjan's imagination, and, at one time he even stood out as a parochial advocate of patriotism, as against the more sublime dogma of an international brotherhood. On this point he once crossed swords with Rabindra Nath Tagore, who had soared to the higher plane of looking at man as a limb and part of the Universal Soul. Chitta Raujan absolutely lacked the idea of

cosmic consciousness and the sense of cosmic solidarity with which the vision of the human race had been widened by the *rishis* of old in ancient India and by seers like Emerson. Walt Whitman, Wordsworth and Tennyson in the West.

Chitta Ranjan's failures and lapses were many, but some of his achievements wer striking and he will long live in memory as the man who first gave check to a powerful government like the British, and as a wonderful magician who in the space of a few years changed and broadened the entire political and intellectual outlook of the Bengali people. He not only scotched dyarchy, in spite of the best efforts of the Government to retain and work it out, but he also succeeded in tearing to tatters all the prestige and authority that the Anglo-Indian government had acquired in the two centuries since Robert Clive laid the foundation of England's Empire in the East. He lived to turn the old acquiescence and the placid contentment of the people into a feeling of bitter dislike and hatred of the powers that be. In this endeavour he was only a destroyer but also a builder, as he lived to organize the most powerful school of political opinion in the country, and made it such a great power in the land that all ambitious men, no matter what their socialrank, looked to him and his party for influence and patronage, rather than to Government House, to which so many generations of Indians had turned for all sorts of personal and social recognition.

Taking everything together, Chitta Ranjan's memory will be cherished by his grateful countrymen as that of a builder rather than a destroyer. When he entered Indian politics, he found political ideals and parties in a most nebulous and chaotic condition. The masses generally, and a large portion of the classes, were still sleeping in the long night of mediaeval mysticism and inaction. Chitta Ranjan whipped up his people from this deep somnolence, brought them face to face with the gravity of their condition, and awakened them to a consciousness of nationhood. He worked day and night for a few years, spent laborious days and sleepless nights, and left behind him a party which, for the first time in the history of India, knows its mind and can gather courage enough to follow its convictions. This will remain the principal landmark of his political work—a whole people brought under a common standard, inspired by ideals of self-help and determination, and set to work out their own destiny without

any extraneous aid or help.

At the same time, as a constructive politician or statesman he fell far behind Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji or Pheroze Shah Mehta, while in astuteness he was no equal to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. But in his immense sacrifice for political idealism, in risking health and life for the organization of a new political party, and in integrity, doggedness and tenacity of purpose, Chitta Ranjan had no equal in India, and even Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, with all his brilliant talents and patriotic devotion, is not to be compared with him. And for moving masses and leading them on from stage to stage, from victory to victory, as a great general, the wizard of Bengal left far behind the prophet and high priest of Young India.

In one very pleasing aspect of his life, Chitta Ranjan bore a striking resemblance to another distinguished Bengali of his day. Like Bhupendra Nath Basu he had great social qualities and had the wonderful power of making friends with all sorts and conditions of people, and turning a large number of politically minded men into loyal and faithful friends. Like Bhupendra Nath Basu again, he was able to keep and hold them together as no other contemporary Bengali had done by his wonderful tact, sweetness of temper and reliance on the loyalty and integrity of his lieutenants. But unlike Bhupendra Nath Basu and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he failed to gather round him many intellectual men and sometimes even repelled them; and also unlike Bhupendra Nath and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he had not the shrewdness to know sincere workers and friends from parasites and flatterers. So long as he was in the saddle things were all right. But as soon as he passed away the flatterers and parasites got the better of the party machine and organization and the real and sincere workers were elbowed and crowded out of public life.

With Surendra Nath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale Chitta Ranjan had three things in common. All of them took politics very seriously, almost raising it to the level of a religion, all of them were extremely sensitive to criticism, so much so that not one of them would speak to a man who would not recognize his authority and bow to his decision; and,

above all, all these three men were supremely innocent of a sense of humour.

It is now necessary to compare this great Bengali with the leaders of the other national movements of our own times in other parts of the world.

There can be no doubt that in powers of organization and in giving obstruction a scientific orientation, in the abundant and diplomatic use of barbed shafts, and for adroitness, he resembled in a great measure Charles Stewart Parnell. With Michael Collins he had little in common, excepting that they were both good generals and clever masters of strategy yet in generalship and powers of organization he could not come near to either Kemal or Zaghlul Pasha. Kemal and Zaghlul have made Turkey and Egypt what they are today; Chitta Ranjan spent himself in the barest spade-work. But it must be said for Chitta Ranjan that he had not the opportunities of life of either a Kemal or a Zaghlul. Zaghlul and Kemal both had a milked honogenous and independent nation behind them. Chitta Ranjan had none of these opportunities. Yet he seems to have achieved more than either of them by welding heterogeneous groups of people into a united nation and knitting together hundreds of impatient idealists, political adventurers, and ambitious self-seekers into a well-disciplined party.

With the last leader of the Progressive Party in the United States who also died in June 1925, Chitta Ranjan had almost a family affinity. Chitta Ranjan, like La Follette, "was gritty and combative, voluble, untiring, abounding in information, terrific in attack, and absolutely fearless".

A very common charge levelled against Chitta Ranjan during his life-time, particularly by Anglo-Indian critics, was that he very often stirred up excitement which he could not lay or control. It is a strange coincidence in human history that such a charge has been levelled against almost every great man in all ages, climes and countries. A similar charge was brought against Gladstone by his political critics, and Lord Morley's refutation of it applies almost with equal force in the case of Chitta Ranjan. In defending this aspect of Gladstone's life, Morley says :[2]

> "To charge him with habitually rousing popular forces into dangerous excitment, is to ignore or mis-read his action in some of the most critical of his movements. 'Here is a man', said Huxley, 'with the greatest intellect in Europe, and yet he debases it by simply following majorities and the crowd'. He was called a mere mirror of the passing humours and intellectual confusions of the popular mind. He had nothing, said his detractors, but a sort of clever pilot's eye for winds and currents, and the rising of the tide to the exact height that would float him and his cargo over the bar. All this is the exact opposite of the truth. What he thought was that the statesman's gift consisted in insight into the facts of a particular era, disclosing the existence of material for forming public opinion and directing public opinion to a given purpose. In every one of his achievements of high mark—even in his last marked failure of achievement—he expressly formed, or endeavoured to form and create, the public opinion upon which he knew that in the last resort he must depend."

After he had overthrown dyarchy for a second time, the bitterness of the Government and the Anglo-Indian Press against him reached its climax. The Serajgunge Resolution, extolling the patriotism of a political assassin, was seized on by Chitta Ranjan's political enemies as an opportunity to crush his growing influence in the country, and brought down upon him the wrath of India's white rulers on both sides of the Suez Canal. At this time Lord Peel, a previous Secretary of State for India, was egging on the MacDonald Government to prosecute Chitta Ranjan Das for the part he had taken in the Serajgunge Resolution, which was interpreted as nothing short of incitement to murder. In declining to put Chitta Ranjan on trial or deport him, Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India in the Labour Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, gave a remarkable testimony to the character of Chitta Ranjan on the authority of the Governor of Bengal. Lord Lytton had informed Lord Olivier that "Mr. Das in India had the reputation of being a particularly upright and scrupulous politician, second only to Gandhi himself in saintliness of character".

This statement, made on the floor of the House of Lords,

caused considerable surprise, and evoked scornful comments both in India and England, and was described in some quarters as extraordinarily "wide of the mark". It was openly stated that a man who in his youth was a *bon viveur* and lavish with his money, and unscrupulous in his political methods, who had publicly declared that all means, no matter what, would always justify the end, was hardly a person who could be described in the language that Lord Olivier had used. Chitta Ranjan's political honesty and integrity of purpose may not have been as transparent as those of Mr. Gandhi, but we have no doubt that after coming into close personal contact with the Saint of Sabarmati, he did his best to reach a higher moral and spiritual plane, and, after 1924, he made a supreme effort to justify Lord Olivier's description of his character.

Through renunciation and sacrifice in the later years of his life, he had elevated his emotionalism into a spiritual force, and had touched the right chord in the very soul of India, which has been, and still remains, more spiritual than material. Rabindra Nath Tagore has summed up the life work of this great Bengali in the following beautiful message :

> "Man truly reveals himself through his gift, and the best gift that Chitta Ranjan has left for his countrymen is not any particular political or social programme, but the creative force of a great aspiration that has taken a deathless form in the sacrifice which his life represented."

Notes and References

1. Yet another scheme of Federalism has been promulgated by Sir Fredeick Whyte, the first President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, since C.R. Das's death.
2. Morley's Life of Gladstone, Vol. 3.

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DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS : POET, PATRIOT AND STATESMAN

BINAYENDRA MOHAN CHAUDHURI

On 5th November 1870, six and a hundred years back from now, was born in Calcutta, Chittaranjan Das, later known as the "Deshbandhu", or the "Friend of the Country", in a family whose members, generous and highminded, had distinguished themselves for generations in the profession of law, and taken leading part in the contemporary religious and reform movements in the country. The time and place of Chittaranjan's birth could hardly have been more favourable. The religious movement fathered by Raja Rammohan Roy and the educational activities of Radha Kanto Deb, his Calcutta School Book Society, the Hindu College, and the missionaries of Serampore, had progressed and taken firm root in the land, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had unleashed the forces of creative imagination and inaugurated a literary renaissance, while the beginnings of a powerful national movement had appeared in the activities of Naba Gopal Mitra and his organisation of the Hindu Mela which ushered in a new spirit of Swadeshi and national self-reliance. The current of these three movements—religious, literary, and national—met in the life of Bengal, in the sixties of the last century, when two greatest products and finest flowers of the Bengal Renaissance were born – Rabindranath in 1861, and Swami Vivekananda in 1863, nine and seven years respectively before Chittaranjan.

The family came from Vikrampur in East Bengal, whose people have been noted for their energy, courage, and a spirit of adventure.

Vikrampur gave birth in ancient times to Dipankar Srijnan Atish; in medieval times to Chand Roy and Kedar Roy who had the courage to rebel against imperial Delhi; in modern times to such eminent men as Aghorenath Chatterjee, father of Sarojini Naidu, Justice Chandramadhab Ghose, Sir J.C. Bose, and Chittaranjan himself.

As already indicated, Chittaranjan's had been a family of lawyers. His grandfather, Kasiswar Das, was the Government Pleader in the court of Barisal, whose three sons, Kalimohan, Durgamohan, and Bhubanmohan, were also lawyers in their turn. Chittaranjan was the eldest son of the youngest brother, Bhubanmohan; and Chittaranjan himself, his first cousins, Satishranjan and Jatishranjan, sons of the second brother Durgamohan, as well as Chittaranjan's own brother Prafullaranjan—all chose the profession of law and reached leading positions in the bar, some adorning both the bar and the bench.

His eldest uncle, Kalimohan, was noted for his high courage and independence of spirit. Provoked by the remark of a High Court judge before whom he was arguing a case, he retorted, "I am surprised, my lord, that though you had been a district judge for so many years, I cannot make you understand what even a student of law can very easily follow." Proceedings were started against him, but when the matter was referred to the full bench of the High Court, the Chief Justice decided in favour of Kalimohan and said, "No doubt Kalimohan Das was intemperate in his language, but the principles of law he was arguing was right. So no action is called for." One recalls a somewhat similar incident also in the case of Chittaranjan, recorded by Upendranath Banerjee, the eminent revolutionary leader and writer who was an accused in the Alipore Bomb case with Aurobindo Ghose, Barindra Ghose and others. "As Chittaranjan was arguing a point in this case," Upendranath, who was in the dock, writes, "the judge Mr. Beachcroft suddenly remarked, "You are talking nonsense'. Closing the book of law and drawing himself up to his full height, Chittaranjan uttered the words, 'You are on the bench. sir, and that language should not come from your mouth. Had we been anywhere else, I would know how to answer'. Ignoring the interruption with this spirited and dignified reply, he continued his arguments, with the judge, red in the face, listening to him."

If Chittaranjan inherited a good deal of his eldest uncle's

independence of spirit, he inherited also the zeal, the idealism, the single-minded devotion to a cause, and the tremendous courage and strength of character which characterised his second uncle, Durgamohan, the most distinguished among the brothers who practicised law first at Barisal and then at the Calcutta High Court. His courage of conviction and reforming zeal were so great that he stood almost alone against the entire society to get his widowed stepmother married, in the teeth of opposition even from his nearest relatives. After Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, he and his friend Dwarkanath Ganguli were the best friends of women and life-long champions of their cause, whether in the sphere of education or in the matter of social justice. His lack of bitterness against his avowed opponents and his generosity and munificence were also remarkable.

Chittaranjan's father, a *Vakil* and attorney of the Calcutta High Court, had literary gifts and a deeply religious nature, and he excelled in composing hymns and devotional songs. A forceful writer, he also edited the *Brahmo Public Opinion* and had the courage to brave the displeasure of the authorities for his forthright expression of opinion. But he was most remarkable for his recklessly generous habit of helping people in distress with money, not only from what he earned, but he never hesitated even to borrow heavily from others to relieve their distress—a failing which ultimately landed him in bankruptcy.

Thus, Chittaranjan obtained from his family a rich and remarkable legacy which he enriched beyond measure in his life, and left it for his countrymen after his death.

Chittaranjan's schooling and college education took place at Calcutta where even at an early age he showed a native gift for eloquence and developed a remarkable debating skill. As Secretary of the Students' Association, he had to invite distinguished men in public life to address them. Thus he came in touch with Surendranath Banerjee, the great all-India leader from Bengal at the time, who was 22 years senior to him. With Bepin Chandra Pal, 12 years his senior, who was then one of the political leaders with renowned intellectual and oratorical gifts, he grew quite intimate—an intimacy which lasted till the non-cooperation movement in 1921, when they parted company with each other on that issue. Even in those early days, he was interested in politics, and his patriotic fervour attracted attention. But his fondness for, and interest in,

literature were perhaps greater at this time, and he loved Bankim Chandra Chatterjee from whom he drew his literary and patriotic inspiration and whose influence remained deep in him up to the last. He was also fond of Tagore in those days, and also of Shelley, Keats, and particularly Browning among English poets. Vaishnava literature also influenced him profoundly and his own poetry shows a remarkable kinship with the Vaishnava lyrics.

After his graduation from Presidency College in 1890, he went to England to compete and qualify for the Indian Civil Service. While preparing for the I.C.S. examination in London, he studied Literature and Philosophy with the renowned scholar and teacher, Professor Carveth Reade, who was all admiration for this brilliant young student from India. But the brilliant student's political ideas, his spirit of patriotism, the eloquence with which he expressed them were poor recommendations for a membership of the "Heaven-born service" he wanted to compete for ! With his zeal for the introduction of reforms in India, he participated in the election campaign of Dadabhai Naoroji against a British candidate for a seat in the House of Commons; with dignity and warmth he spoke against the humiliating remarks of Lord Salisbury about Dadabhai Naoroji ("that black man of India"); with devastating eloquence he protested against the disgraceful remarks of a British M.P. about Indians—a protest which was so effective in rousing public opinion in England that the arrogant M.P. had to offer a public apology. He failed ultimately to get into the I.C.S., and in the context of this failure, the following remarks, given in a letter to his father, of a British friend of the family, Sir Richard Garth, an ex-Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, are significant: "I tried my best but the fiery speeches of your son at Oldham have spoiled everything. I could not persuade the India Office." So the future "Deshbandhu" had to join the Inner Temple and return from England as a barrister and take to the profession of his family, joining the Calcutta High Court in December 1893.

All lawyers have to struggle hard initially, but Chittaranjan's struggle had to be much harder than usual, for his old retired father's enormous debts, incurred mostly to help others, had to be cleared, and full repayment in a short time being impossible, and the creditors having taken their cases to the court, both father and son "were declared insolvent" within less than three years of his practice. For quite a few years, Chittaranjan had to struggle very

hard for bare survival.

In the meantime, the political horizon of Bengal was gradually being clouded with the arrival of Lord Curzon in Calcutta in 1899, as the Viceroy and Governor-General. His arrogant policy, which culminated in his determination to partition Bengal, sought to curb and cripple the growing militancy of the political movement in Bengal. Chittaranjan had already been in close touch with the extremist section of the leadership in the national movement represented mainly by Bepin Chandra Pal, under whose editorship the *New India*, an extremist paper, was started in 1901. "From its very birth," says Bepin Chandra, "Chittaranjan was very intimately associated with it. When the original proprietors found it difficult to bear its burdens, Chittaranjan came forward to save it."

The Risley paper on the scheme of partitioning Bengal was published on 3rd December 1903 which raised a storm of protest all over Bengal and ushered in the first phase of the anti-partition agitation. A "Swadeshi Mandali" was formed in Chittaranjan's house in 1904, with a few political friends to propagate the idea of self-help and Swadeshi. In October 1905, in a speach at Darjeeling he explained that "the chief reason for which the Swadeshi movement is desirable is that it provides the first step towards the path of self-reliance. . . . As every person has to work out his future through his personal exertion, so is the case with a nation. It has to depend upon its own strength for achieving freedom. But if you depend on another nation, even in thousands of years you will not find the path of real freedom." All this he said in protest against the mendicant policy be begging for reforms and depending on the whims of British masters to grant them, adopted by the leaders of the Congress. Even then he and a few like-minded friends realized the necessity of a national system of education, and when in October 1905, the notorious Carlyle circular was issued prohibiting the students from taking part in Swadeshi and politics, and Subodh C. Mullick offered, in protest, to donate one hundred thousand rupees for the establishment of a national college, Chittaranjan eagerly accepted the offer and announced the project of a national university on 9th November 1905.

Thus the National Council of Education was formed and at Chittaranjan's request, Aurobindo Ghose resigned his Vice-Principalship of the Gaekwar College of Baroda and came to

Calcutta to join the National Council of Education as its first principal in 1906.

On July 19, 1905, formal announcement was made that Bengal was to be partitioned and that the partition was to take effect on 16th October. The Swadeshi spirit had already been in the air for quite some time, and with this announcement, boycott and the Swadeshi movement with all its fervour and enthusiasm started. Circular after circular restricting the movement began to be issued by the Government. Even the shouting of "Bande-Mataram" was banned. "The climax was reached," as Surendranath Banerjee, the "uncrowned leader of Bengal" in the partition movement, put it, "when the police assaulted the delegates of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal in April 1906, and forcibly dispersed the Conference." Indeed Barisal Conference created history. When the delegates were going in procession to the *pandal*, they were attacked by the police with six-feet long thick sticks called regulation *lathis*. Without resorting to force in self-defence, the non-violent delegates continued to shout "Bande-Mataram" in reply which only infuriated the police, who continued their merciless beating. With the extremist leaders, Chittaranjan also attended this conference and drafted the main resolution in the conference advocating the policy of self-reliance and rejecting that of petitions and appeals to the foreign power.

Later in the year a controversy arose over the choice of presidentship for the annual session of the Congress at Calcutta between Surendranath Banerjee on the one hand and Bepin Chandra Pal and Chittaranjan on the other. The partition movement was taking a violent turn and assuming a revolutionary character. The vigour of the movement was increased when Tilak arrived in Calcutta in June, 1906, to organise the Shivaji festival and declared, "Swaraj is my birthright". All these dampened the enthusiasm of the constitutionally-minded Surendranath and he did not like the proposal of Bepin Chandra and Chittaranjan to choose Tilak as the President, and actually opposed it. To forestall this extremist choice, Surendranath and his moderate friends secured the consent of Dadabhai Naoroji by a wire and baulked the plan of the extremists. Tilak attended this session as a delegate and he and his contingent of Maharastrians stayed with Chittaranjan in his house as his guests. A close relationship between Chittaranjan Das and Bal Gangadhar Tilak was established

at this time, a relationship which grew so intimate later that in the Amritsar session of the Congress in 1919 –which was the last session Tilak was to attend, for he died a few months later—when a compromise amendment to resolve the differences among the leaders, was drafted and shown to Tilak, he said, "If Chittaranjan approves, I will have no objection." When Chittaranjan approved of this compromise, differences in the leadership were resolved, for the time being.

For some time before the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, a need was being felt among the leaders of the extremist section in Calcutta to start a paper to voice their opinion. Accordingly, during this session of the Congress, the English paper *Bande Mataram* appeared with the motto "India for Indians". It was financed by Chittaranjan, Subodh Mullick and others. Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose were to be the chief writers. The articles panned partlcularly by Aurobindo for this paper at this time may rank with the noblest literature of patriotism, ever produced at any time, in any country.

The conflict between the moderates and the extremists climaxed in the next session of the Congress at Surat where the moderates won and the extremists were ousted from the Congress. Unity between the two sections was not achieved till the Lucknow Congress in 1916, and the period between 1908 and 1916 was marked by the emergency of an underground movement of revolutionary violence in Bengal; retirement of Aurobindo from politics in 1909; and deportation of a number of extremist leaders of Bengal, Subodh Mullick, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Aswini Kumar Dutt and a few otherss; imprisonment of Tilak; a series of political cases of sedition, murder, and conspiracy to wage war against the British government in India, which continued till the end of the World War I; and detention of thousands of young men without trial under the Defence of India Act. This is the period when Congress was wholly in the hands of the moderates like G.K. Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjee. Chittaranjan had practically to give up active politics, concentrate on his profession and pursue his literary and cultural activities. But this is again the period when he defended mostly without fees, almost all the political cases all over the province at a great cost to his profession. and rescued a few revolutionary leaders and workers from the gallows and redcued the heavy sentences

awarded to many of them by the lower courts. Indeed the conduct of the defence in these cases over these years, without proper fees, incurring huge personal debts, must always be regarded as highly patriotic and as a form of political activity undertaken by Chittaranjan during this period.

The first two cases occurred at about the same time in 1907. Two articles in the *Bande Mataram* were considered seditious by the government and they prosecuted Aurobindo Ghose supposing him to be the writer of the anonymous articles. Bepin Chandra Pal was brought before the court to give evidence which would go against Aurobindo. At counsel Chittaranjan's advice, Bepin Chandra refused to give evidence with the words, "I have conscientious objections to take part or swear in these proceedings", and continued to "refuse to answer any question in connection with the case". Punishment was inevitable and Bepin Chandra Pal was given 6 months' imprisonment, but Aurobindo was acquitted and Chittaranjan's eloquent advocacy on behalf of Bepin Chandra made a deep impression on the judge as well as the public. The second case was in connection with an article by Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya in his Bengali paper *Sandhya.* Brahmabandhab, too, was defended by Chittaranjan, but Brahmabandhab died before the trial was concluded.

But the political case which catapulted him to the topmost position in the bar and to the pinnacle of fame and glory. patriotic and legal, was the famous Alipore Bomb case in which Aurobindo Ghose, his brother Barindra Kumar Ghose, Upendranath Banerjee, Ullaskar Datta, and others were tried. The trial began in October 1908. The brief was not given to Chittaranjan at first, as Aurobindo's father-in-law wanted to engage a senior counsel. But the funds for defence were meagre. These were exhausted and the senior counsels would not work without fees. So, the brief came to Chittaranjan, who accepted it with alacrity, though this meant great hardship for the family, for Chittaranjan had built up his practice and been earning enough to live up to his standard, after a long struggle. To accept this brief meant little or no income for months and consequent borrowing and hardship. The case actually went on for about a year and his debts in this period mounted to over Rs. 50,000.

Oblivious of the financial consequences, oblivious of everything else, Chittaranjan devoted himself exclusively to this case,

studying the facts of the case and books of law day and night. It was a *tapasya*. The conduct of the case, his devastating cross-examination tearing the evidence of prosecution witness to shreds; his profound grip of the facts of the case and points of law; the incomparable eloquence of his address to the jury; and, his resounding success in rescuing one of the greatest Indians, and later, one of the greatest men of his time, from the sure jews of death, have all made this a classic case. As his biographer, Dr. Hemendra Nath Das Gupta states, "Over 200 witnesses were examined, 400 paper exhibits and 500 material exhibits in the form of boms and explosives were filed. Chittaranjan's concluding address continued for 9 days." His address to the jury, including its peroration, a few lines from which are extracted below, reads like a piece of literature with the vision of a prophet. Representing Aurobindo and interpreting the ideas and thoughts he had conceived and preached, Chittaranjan, addressing the jury as Aurobindo's counsel, said :

> "If it is suggested that I preached the ideal of freedom for my country and that this is against the law, I plead guilty to the charge. If that is the law here, I say I have done that and I request you to convict me, but do not impute to me crimes I am not guilty of, deeds against which my whole nature revolts and which, having regard to my mental capacity, is something which could never have been perpetrated by me. If it is an offence to preach the ideal of freedom, I admit having done it. I have never disputed it. It is for this that I have given up all the prospects of my life. It is for this that I came to Calcutta, to live for it and to labour for it. It has been the one thought of my waking hours, the dream of my sleep. If that is my offence, there is no necessity of bringing witnesses into the box to depose different things in connection what that. Here am I and I admit it. . . .If that is my fault, you can chain me, imprison me, but you will never get out of me a denial of that charge. . . ."

Then Chittaranjan concluded with this appeal :

"My appeal to you, therefore, is that a man like this, who is being charged with the offence with which he has been

charged, stands not only before the Bar of the High Court of History. My appeal to you is this: that long after this controversy will he hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation will have cheased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and a lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands. . . ."

The assessors gave the verdict in favour Aurobindo and on the 6th May, 1909. Mr. Beachcroft gave his judgment acquitting Aurobindo Ghose, but awarding death sentence to Barindra Kumar and Ullaskar Dutt, which was inter commuted, in both cases, into life sentence on appeal, which was moved and conducted again by Chittaranjan at the High Court.

On his acquittal, Aurobindo referred in these words to Chittaranjan: "He came unexpectedly, a friend of mine. . . .You have all heard the name of the man who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice, who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me —Srijut Chittaranjan Das. When I saw him I was satisfied."

This case established his reputation as one of the greatest criminal lawyers in the country and abroad; it also marked him out as a great patriot. An equally big and resounding case on the civil side, the Dumraon case—a case with a very big stake and which looked like a lost case—came to him. But Chittaranjan, with his exceptional knowledge of law and forensic ability, succeeded is securing victory for his client. Between them these two cases, one criminal and the other civil, led to a phenomenal rise in his position in the bar as well as income in his profession. Henceforward, he commanded any fees he liked all over the country for his professional services. Very soon he repaid all his father's depts voluntarily and removed the stain of insolvency from his father's name.

But whatever he earned in his profession—and there is no doubt that he earned a fabulous amount—vanished almost in the twinkling of an eye, spent not only in the luxury of princely living —he acquired a legendary fame similar to Pandit Motilal Nrhru's in this respect—but also in his princely gift of charity. And his charities were extended not only to public institutions and

patriotic ventures, and to organisations doing floods, famines and other public calamities, but also to endless numbers of individuals —men and women with real or fake tales of distress who crowded the threshold of his house. He was indeed not a miser hoarding up riches but a millionaire spending them, and as it was his pleasure to give pleasure, he gave without ever enquiring whether the money went to the deserving or the underserving. He did not grow cynical, even though such instances occurred when the money he had borrowed to help a friend in distress was not returned when years after, the latter was in affluence and he himself had long given up his practice, and was a sick man and dying and needed money to recover his health, Victor Hugo's Bishop in *Les Miserables* and Goldsmith's village priest in *The Deserted Village* may appear to be idealisations of reality possible only in imaginative literature like fiction and poetry, but Chittaranjan has proved that in this matter, reality can reach the ideal in actual life as well.

Law is said to be a jealous mistress; even so, Chittaranjan had not deserted his first love, poetry and literature. Indeed, till about the end of World War I he was regarded by his friends more as a literary than a political figure. For he was born poet, a poet of considerable creative energy and ability, of rich emotions and keen sensibility, qualities which were not to be wasted altogether in the desert air of the Calcutta High Court. He used to write poetry when he was in his teens. In his youth he moved in literary circles and attended the literary meetings in societies and gatherings where poets like Tagore and D.L. Roy also met and gave readings of their poems. Chittaranjan also read his poems there and received appreciation from Tagore and others. Altogether, he wrote five books of poems, the first of which, *Malancha* or the "Flower Garden", came out in 1896; the second, *Mala* or the "Garland" in 1902; the third and his masterpiece, *Sagar-Sangeet* or "Song of the Sea" in 1910; the fourth, *Antaryami* or "Lord of the Soul" in 1914; and the last, *Kishor-Kishori* or "The Young Adolescents" in 1915. They are mainly poems of love and nature and of religious devotion. Chittaranjan was deeply and profoundly religious. His religion was the religion of love, and compassion and devotional surrender to the Lord. Born in a Brahma family, he became a Vaisnava and had love for all, even the outcaste and the hated in society. His early poem on the

"Fallen Women" ("Bar-bilashini") shows his deep compassionate nature which knows only to love and understand, and not to judge. It recalls Christ's saving of the woman caught in adultery and being stoned to death. Some of his poems were translated by Shri Aurobindo. Simplicity, sincerity and lyric abandon characterise the poems and their appeal goes straight to the heart. During the latter part of this literary period, he shed his early admiration for Tagore and started a literary journal, *Narayan*, much as a counter-blast to *Sabuj-patra* of Pramatha Chaudhuri, who belonged to Tagore school of literature. Chittaranjan, as editor of *Narayan*, gathered round him a group of powerful writers, who may be said to have belonged to the *Narayan* school, and were for greater emphasis on the native tradition and indigenous source of inspiration and influence as against what they considered excess of western influence in the use not only of western thought and ideas, but also of subtle imageries which characterise Tagore's poetry and other writings. Simplicity, and directness, and lack of sophistication they aimed at. Such powerful writers as Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Girija Sankar Ray Chaudhuri, Upendranath Banerjee used to write in this journal. Chittaranjan himself contributed poems, literary and critical essays, and even short stories, and the journal became a power in literary circles in Bengal.

In 1915, after the release of Tilak and the entry of Mrs. Annie Besant into the Congress, there was a unity between the moderates and the extremists in the Congress session of 1916 at Lucknow, when the Lucknow pact was also concluded between the Congress and the Muslim League and a scheme of constitutional reforms was formulated and accepted at a joint conference of Hindu and Muslim leaders. Chittaranjan also staged a come-back, and with Byomkesh Chakravorty, became an important leader of the extremist section of the Congress. He also became a fervent adherent of Mrs. Besant in her home Rule League movement, which was supported by Tilak but opposed by the moderates.

In April 1917, Surendranath Banerjee proposed Chittaranjan's name to be the president of the Bengal Provincial Conference in Calcutta with the remark that Chittaranjan would soon be one of the most trusted and beloved leaders of India. The speech Chittaranjan gave in this conference as its President is "the first major political pronouncement" he made and is memorable for its

deep and lasting significance. It reveals his political philosophy, his concept of nationalism and the source and nature of his patriotism. He deplored the fact that we had "drifted away from the ancient landmarks of our soul—its history, its culture, its law and its philosophy and went in passionate pursuit of the Literature, Science and Philosophy of the English people. . . we overlooked altogether the fact that Rammohan had sought to find the path of our salvation in the midst of our national culture and civilization. . . our bent towards western civilization became more marked still. Then after long years Bankim Chandra came and set up the image of our Mother in the Motherland. . . The song which he sang was of this Mother 'well-watered, well-fruited, cool with the south breeze, green with the growing corn'." Next, he referred to "the trumpet of Swadesism" which "began to sound in 1905. The people of Bengal began once more to understand and realise themselves. Rabindranath sang, 'The soil of Bengal, the water of Bengal—make it true O Lord'. He condemned the kind of "soulless culture" western education had given rise to and characterised the Swadeshi movement as "the great flood of life" which "submerged us and enabled us to come once more in contact with the living, vital soul of Bengal." He traced the source of "the stream of culture and civilization which has been flowing perennially through the heart of Bengal" in the soul of Buddhism, of Saivism, Saktaism, and of Vaisnavism; the song of Chandidas and Vidyapati; the radiant glory of Chaitanya's life and the poetic strains of the Vaisnava poets, Jnan Das, Govinda Das; devotional music of Ramprasad; Rammohan's deep discipline and Bankim's worship of the Motherland; Ramkrishna's God-intoxicated personality and Vivekananda's speech and activity which filled our souls and made us understand "that the Bengalee might be a Hindu or Mohamedan or Christian but he continued to be a Bengalee all the same; that he has a distinct type, a distinct character." The problem was how to develop fully this new consciousness and this newly-awakened national life. He added, "We shall have to adopt such measures for the improvement of those conditions as may be consonant with our national life and the continuity of our national history."

Apart from the cultural approach to the concept of nationality, Chittaranjan also gave the outline of a scheme for the reorganisation of the villages, setting up of village assemblies,

election of Panchayats who will have the power to administer the villages, look to sanitation, arrange weter supply, establish night schools, organise industrial and agricultural education, and set up public granaries to which each agricultural proprietor will contribute according to the extent of his land so that these public granaries could be drawn upon to feed the people in the years of drought and scarcity. Among other things, he also talked of cooperative credit societies to give loans to cultivators at low interest in times of need and to start cottage industries. All these ideas set forth by Chittaranjan in 1917 have a family resemblance with Tagore's ideas of 'the Swadeshi Samaj' and rural reconstruction; with the programme and activities of that great leader from Barisal, Aswini Kumar Datta and his *Swadesh Bandhab Samity* during the Swadeshi movement; and of course with Gandhiji's plans for constructive work. Indeed, Chittaranjan was more interested in the economic betterment and happiness of the people of the villages and towns than in political activities. In 1924 when the Swarajists were ascendant and dominated the political life of the country, he often said, "The political programme would better be looked to by Subhash, Tulsi (Goswami) and others and I shall devote myself to remove the economic slavery of the people." This speech at the provincial conference was referred to in his book, *The Heart of Aryawarta* by Lord Ronaldshay, who said, "Mr. Das spoke indeed with all the ardour of a missionary. He smote to pieces the golden calf which he set up as symbolical of the ideals of Europe and with the fervour of a seer he promised the way to a promised land." Sister Nivedita complmented him with the words: "I knew you to be great, but I did not know that you were so great !"

Shortly after this conference, Mrs. Besant, owing to her dynamic Home Rule movement, was interned and Chittaranjan, who actively supported her and her movement, protested strongly and in a meeting organised at the Indian Association, Calcutta said, "I do not think that the God of Humanity was crucified only once. Tyrants and oppressors have crucified humanity again and again. Every outrage on humanity is a fresh nail driven through his sacred flesh." On her release shortly after, Mrs. Besant was elected President of the Congress Session at Calcutta, in December 1917, mainly through the efforts of Chittaranjan. Surendranath Banerjee opposed her election unsuccessfully.

On 20th August 1917, Montague, the Secretary of State for India, announced in the Parliament that "progressive realisation of responsible government in India is the goal of British policy in India." This announcement was followed by his visit to India to discuss the coming reforms with the Indian leaders. An interesting account of his talks with various leaders have been given in his book, *The Indian Diary*. In his three-hour talk with Chittaranjan, whom he described as "on extremist, but a most sensible fellow," Montague remarked, "His (Chittaranjan's) demand is complete responsibility at once for local government. Das argued very strongly. I argued with him I implored him . . . He added, 'The half-way house is no good; there is no intermediate stage possible between Responsible Government and complete responsibility.' He attracted me enormously. Das further added: 'Well, give us Standing Committees, a new electorate, decent legislative councils and no powers for five years, promising us it all in five years in your House of Parliament. I would rather have this than steps that I know will not work'."

The Congress of 1917 with Mrs. Besant as President saw the last of the moderates as a group in the Congress who later left this organisation and formed the Liberal League. Henceforward, the mantle of Surendranath as the undisputed leader of Bengal in Congress politics practically fell on Chittaranjan and the former left the Congress for good.

Next annual session of the Congress was held in Delhi in December 1918. The draft resolution signed by the Secretary of State and the Governor- General was published in July 1918, and it became an issue in this Congress between some moderate leaders who attended it, bent on accepting the Reforms, and the extremists like Deshbhandhu who found the Reforms disappointing and unsatisfactory. Prof. J.L. Banerjee related what happend in this session. He said, "The whole discussion was about the Reforms. Deshbandhu was our leader. We were to oppose the Reforms. On the other side were ranged many distinguished personages. Mrs. Besant, Srinivasa Sastri and the President himself, Pandit Madan Mohan Malvia. Mr. Das rose after noon and by his wonderful eloquence he tore into shreds the arguments of his opponents. The victory was his . . . . The veteran old Dewan of Travancore, Mr. V.P. Madhav Rao said, 'How beautyfully

Das fired up ! I never saw anything like it'." By this time he had become one of the most prominent all-India Congress leaders.

A most imprortant even that took place in 1919 was the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill and its passing, in spite of vehement protests, into an Act on 18 March 1919. It authorised the Government of India to suppress political movement by detaining people without trial. The opposition to it led to a strong movement and Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for 'Satyagraha' (which literally means "persistence in truth" but is freely translated as "passive resistance") on 6th April and on that pay *hartal* was observed throughout the country. This Satyagraha was strongly supported by Chittaranjan, who on 6th April evening, addressed a meeting in Calcutta and expatiated on the meaning of Satyagraha in the following words: "Satyagraha is spiritual force. It is the power of love. With love we shall conquer the self. We shall gave up selfiseness, hatred and envy and shall be self-controlled. This no doubt the message of Mahatma Gandhi, but it is the time-honoured message of India, the message of Prahlad, Meera Bai and Vasishtha. The Rowlatt Act is an obstacle to the movement for freedom. We cannot attain freedom unless we remove the obstacle. For that we have to enkindle love for our country, we have to be Satyagrahis and give up hatred and envy." This extract shows his sympathy and even kinship with the spiritual side of Gandhiji's politics and explains the great regard and friendship he felt for the Mahatma. In that meeting, he futher added, " As the Bills are subversive of the principle of liberty and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals, in the event of these Bills becoming Law, and until they are withdrawn I shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and other such laws and I further affirm that in this struggle I shall faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property."

The Satyagraha movement was sought to be repressed in the Punjab with an iron hand, where feelings and excitement ran high. On his way to Lahore, Gandhiji was detained. Martial law was declared, public flogging administered, and people were subjected to incredible humiliation and given barbarous sentences. The climax was reached with the massacre at Amritsar when unsuspecting, innocent men, women, and children were fired upon as they were resting at Jalianwallabagh and killed by the orders of

General Dyer. This horrible massacre and this kind of barbarous handling of the people in the Punjab sent a wave of horror throughout the country and even abroad, for even a veteran enemy of Indian freedom. Winston Churchill, then an M.P., bitterly condemned this barbarism in the House of Commons with his characteristic eloquence. An official Enquiry Committee was formed with Lord Hunter as Chairman. It was decided that Chittaranjan should be present at the sittings of the Committee and cross-examine the witnesses. The government rejected this. Then it was proposed that the leaders of the Punjab who were arrested should be allowed to give evidence before the Committee. This was rejected too. Chittaranjan and Pandit Motilal Nehru than suggested that these Punjab leaders should be allowed to have their statements recorded. Even this was rejected. Thereupon A.I.C.C., instituted a non-official Enquiry Committee with Chittaranjan, Pandit Motilal, Abbas Tyabji and Dr. M.R. Jayakar as its members and Mahatmaji as the Chairman.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Chittaranjan was so shocked and pained by the happenings in the Punjab that in the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Mymensingh in May 1919 he proposed to resort to action rather than pass a resolution. He remarked, "Let us risk our all; otherwise no use playing this game." He wanted himself, his followers and fellow-workers to plunge headlong into a Satyagraha movement there and then. A vote was taken. He was defeated. It is interesting to note that his worthy and noble wife, Basanti Debi, voted for his proposal, but his daughter and son-in-law voted against it. He had indeed been preparing himself for some time to give up his practice and plunge into an all-out movement for "Swaraj".

The Hunter Committee report was not yet published when on 24th December 1919, the Government of India Act, 1919 was passed in the Parliament introducing a system of dyarchical government—a system strongly disapproved of by Chittaranjan. The annual session of the Congress was held a few days after this at Amritsar with Pandit Motilal as the President. This session and the next two sessions of the Congress, viz., the special session at Calcutta in September 1920, and the annual session at Nagpur in December 1920 have a significant historic and dramatic interest. At the Amritsar Congress in December 1919, Chittaranjan, the exponent of the extremist view, was opposed to Mahatmaji; at

the Special Congress at Calcutta in September 1920 also, the two clashed, but with their roles almost reversed; and lastly, at the annual Congress session at Nagpur in December 1920 where the two were reconciled and united in the project of launching a non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience movement in the country. The story of this drama has been succinctly put by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the following words :

"At the Amritsar session of the Congress in December 1919 along with B. Chakravorti, he (i.e., Chittaranjan) led the left wing opposition to the proposal to work the Reforms of 1919 which was advocated by no less a man than Mahatma Gandhi himself and which was ultimately adopted by the Congress. Earlier in the year he had responded to the call of Satyagraha sent out by the Mahatma but the movement had proved to be abortive. Following the massacre at Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar in April 1919 when the Congress appointed a Committee of Enquiry, the Deshbandhu was appointed a member and devoted several months's hard work to the enquiry. The meagre response made by British Government to the public demand for the redress of the Amritsar wrongs caused such a profound shock to the moral sense of Mahatma Gandhi as to force him to alter his lifelong attitude of co-operation towards the British Government. At the special session of the Congress convened in September 1920 at Calcutta, the Mahatma gave the go-by to the Amritsar resolution, advocated total rejection of the constitution and launched his plan of non-violent non-co-operation for winning 'Swaraj'. At this session, the Deshbandhu with his followers strenuously opposed the Mahatma but was defeated by an overwhelming majority. The opposition was not directed against the method of non-co-oreration as such, but against certain items of activity which were regarded as either inadvisable or impracticable. . . . At the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, when the matter came up for ratification, he intended to continue his opposition but an understanding was arrived at between the Mahatma and himself as a result of which he dropped his opposition and came forward to second the Mahatma's resolution on non-co-operation. . . . The opposition, which

was not negligible at Calcutta, melted away at Nagpur and an undivided Congress faced the public at the beginning of the new year."

As indicated by Subhas Chandra, the difference at Amritsar between Gandhiji who wanted to work the Reforms and Chittaranjan who did not, is to be accounted for by the Manatma's lingering faith in British justice, which made him plead for co-operation in December 1919 at Amritsar. But that faith was *completely* shattered by events in 1920, subsequent to the Amritsar session of the Congress, viz., the resolution of the British House of Lords refusing to condemn General Dyer; the publication of the report of the Hunter Committee in May 1920 practically exonerating the perpetrators of the Amritsar massacre and the official action during the Martial Law regime in the Punjab; and last but not least, British government's betrayal of Indian Muslim by signing the Treaty of Severes in August 1920 destroyed all hopes of a generous treatment of Turkey at the conclusion of the war—a treatment which was so loudly promised and so often assured during was by the British to purchase full and active support of Indian Muslims for the war. As C.F. Andrews pointed out, "His (Gandhiji's) cup of humiliation was full and he made the great decision of his life to refuse to co-operate any longer with the British government in India until both these wrongs were righted and Swaraj was obtained." From this time, he started calling the British government in India a "satanic" government. Chittaranjan, on his part, differed essentially with the Mahatma in the latter's proposal for the boycott of councils which Chittaranjan always thought would be a strategical mistake for the councils, in the absence of Congressmen, would be filled by reactionaries who would be tools in the hands of the bureaucracy and retard the movement for freedom. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also noticed the cause and extent of this difference between the two. He observed, "Mr. C.R. Das led the opposition (in Calcutta) not because he disapproved of the spirit behind the resolution (of non-co-operation), for he was prepared to go as far, or even further, but chiefly because he objected to the boycott of the new legislature." Indeed, he always believed that it was a mistake to avoid the struggle within the councils by not entering them, and from the beginning he was against the boycott of councils. He

was for the boycott of schools, colleges, and law courts and was himself prepared to give up his practice, but boycott of councils, he thought, would be a mistake. For Congress membership of the councils would prove a great embarrassment to the government and appointment of ministers could be made impossible by the adverse vote of the Congress and its allies. But all his attempts failed in Calcutta, and since, according to the Congress mandate, Congress members could not take part in the elections to the Councils under the new Reforms Act—and elections to the Council actually took place in November 1920, i.e., two months after the Special Congress at Calcutta which was held on 4th September—there was not much point to insist on council entry at Nagpur in December. Reconciliation between Mahatma and Chittaranjan was possible also because by this time the latter felt his' spiritual kinship with Gandhiji as well as Gandhiji's acceptance of the extremist idea and form of a struggle which Chittaranjan had been advocating at Mymensingh and elsewhere in May 1919 and for which he had been preparing himself when the Mahatma, on the other hand, had pinned his faith on British justice. The passing of the Rowlatt Bill, and, as already indicated, the Amritsar Massacre. The Hunter Committee Report and finally, British Government's exoneration of General Dyer and his misdeeds turned Mahatma Gandhi from their best friend and co-operator into an avowed non-co-operator and who would no longer co-operate with the "Satanic" government. With the dawn of 1921, Congress discarded the path of co-operation and constitutional agitation and chose that of peaceful rebellion.

The crowing glory of Chittaranjan's career was reached during the last years of his life, 1921-25. The significance of this last phase, which began in 1921, in the life of this emancipated man have been described in words of restrained emotion and calm detachment by one of his greatest and dearest followers, Subhas Chandra Bose, who wrote, "The new year—1921 meant a new life for the Deshbandhu. It was not merely the call of a new political technique which had lured him at Nagpur, but also the call of a new life of which the Mahatma was the instrument. For the consummation, he had been preparing all his life perhaps unconsciously at times. With a wrench, he tore himself away from his old associations and his unconverted friends and with supreme disgust he flung his barrister's gown. Against the dawn

of 1921, there now stood not merely a whole-time politician but an emancipated soul—a soul reborn. Inspired by a taste of that fullness of life which brings man nearer to divinity and consciousness of a higher duty to his nation and to humanity, he plunged into the thick of the political strife. His complete renunciation in the cause of the nation roused the affection and gratitude of his countrymen who spontaneously conferred on him the title of Deshbandhu' or 'Friend of the Country'."

As indicated above, in the last years 1921-25 Chittaranjan reached the climax and consummation of his life. The most eminent barrister earning a fabulous amount of money gave up his practice, renounced princely luxuries, his varied interests and associations, and concentrated on the task he had taken on hand in order to fulfil his mission of achieving "Swaraj" or giving up his life in the attempt. First, he announced his renunciation of his legal practice and then he turned to the task of winning over the youth to his cause and called on the students of schools and colleges to leave them to join the movement. In the meantime, he promised to start a National College for the students who had left their institutions—a promise which he fulfilled a few months later. The National College was opened by Mahatma Gandhi with Subhas Chandra as the first Principal. About 30,000 students left their colleges in Bengal—perhaps the largest number for a province— at his call. Then he undertook a whirlwind tour in East Bengal to rouse people's enthusiasm and recruit them for coming civil disobedience movement, asking lawyers to give up practice and young people to leave their schools and colleges. Everywhere enthusiasm and response were tremendous. He went to Narayanganj, thence to Dacca, and then to Mymensingh where he had come before in May 1919 to attend the provincial conference and was outvoted when he proposed starting Satyagraha then and there. This time Mymensingh created history. On 2nd March 1921, he arrived at Mymensingh station. The news of his coming drew thousands upon thousands of men, women, and even children from all over the district. When the train arrived, for miles around the station there was a sea of human heads. The government had already grown extremely nervous and as he alighted from the traid, the Additional District Magistrate handed over to him an order prohibiting him from entering the town. With difficulty he was dissuaded from disobeying the order by his

followers who pointed out that the Congress had not yet asked people to defy such orders and that his arrest at that juncture would harm the movemet which was gathering momentum by the influence of his magnetic personality. No single act of the unimaginative bureaucracy could have furthered the cause of the Congress better. People were frenzied and it was a feat for him and the local leaders and voluntees to keep the people non-violent. *Hartal* was observed spontaneously on that day, some wanted to extend it for seven days. Students left their schools, colleges, and examination halls, lawyers suspended their practice, at least for a time, and Mymensing became thenceforward one of the most important and dynamic centres of Congress movement, as it had been during the anti-partition and later revolutionary movements decade or so earlier.

From Mymensingh, volunteers took him to the house of Wajid Ali Khan Pani known as Chand Mian, the Zemindar of Karatia in the sub-division of Tangail, who was a highly respected aristocratic leader in the locality. Chand Mian hosted him, came under his influence, joined the movement and later found himself in prison. From Tangail to Chandpur, then to Sylhet in Assam, thence to Chittagang—it was roses, roses all the way. The enthusiasm he roused among all kinds of people, high and low, men and women, rich and poor, knew no bounds. Almost everywhere students left their educational institutions, lawyers suspended their practice. He came back to Calcutta at the end of March to join Barisal Conference and thence he went to Bezwada on 31st March to attend the A.I.C.C. meeting there. In that meeting it was resolved to raise 10 million rupees for the Tilak Swarajya Fund, recruit to million members, and introduce two million spinning wheels Bengal's quota was 1.5 million rupees and on his return, Deshbandhu raised this sum in a few months, by 30th June, to be precise. People had opened their purse-strings and gave generously. All kinds and classes of men contributed. At one place, two blind beggars paid their day's collection. Women donated not only money but ornaments also. Even prostitutes gave and the Deshbandhu accepted their gifts with respect. In May, he undertook a similar tour of North Bengal and went to Malda, Rajshahi, Bogra. Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri. Being informed of the Tea Garden workers' strike at this time at Chandpur, which was joined by the crew of the steamships, he

came there from North Bengal and stood by their side. He went to Bombay to attend the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee at the end of July. It was resolved there that the coming visit of the Prince of Wales to India in November would be boycotted and by 30th September complete boycott of foreign cloth would be effected. Thus started boycott and burning of foreign cloth in parks and meetings. He felt the need of a paper to propagate the idea of Swaraj end started a weekly, *Banglar Katha* on 30th September and of the four articles published in the first issue, three were written by him, one declaring the policy of the paper, the second entitled "Swaraj Sadhana" or "Struggle for Swaraj" and third, "Bastra Yagna" or the "Sacrifice of Cloth".

The Congress Working Committee met in Bombay in October next. In this meeting the view was expressed that government servants—civil or military—who can live without assistance from the Congress, should give up government service. This view contained in a resolution was repeated from a hundred platforms in the country.

By this time, Deshbandhu had gathered round him a galaxy of lieutenants who were to provide leadership in the province and in the country for decades after his death—Subhas Chandra Bose, J.M. Sen Gupta, Birendranath Sasmal, Tulsi Chandra Goswami, Kiran Sankar Roy, and a number of others. A magnetic personality, he had a genius to attract all kinds of people—particularly young men of idealism and self-sacrifice, harness them to his work and get the best out of them. That was how he won over the revolutionary leaders and workers of Bengal, who had spent the best years of their lives in prison and who had looked upon him as their greatest friend and benefactor, and secured from them a solemn promise to eschew the path of violence at least for the time being in 1921, and join the non-cooperation movement in 1921. Leaders like Maharaj Trailokya Nath Chakravorty of the "Anusilan Samiti", and Surendra Mohan Ghose of "Jugantar", who later worked as his right-hand man in the Tarakeswar Satyagraha movement, came closest to him. In a personal letter to a follower of his, Surendra Mohan wrote, "My revolutionary life started from the day when I wrote my oath with my blood and joined the movement of Aurobindo Ghose; and later, it was Deshbandhu who opened my

eyes and made me conscious of the glory and honour that came to me as a legacy from my birth as a Bengali and an Indian." An arch-revolutionary, Surendra Mohan was one of the strongest links between the violent and the non-violent phase of India's struggle for freedom, who. as one of his lieutenants, worked with the Deshbandhu till his end came in 1925, when Surendra Mohan, Subhas Chandra and others were state prisoners in Mandalay jail in Burma.

The story of the meeting of Subhas and Deshbandhu and their growing relationship in the course of only a little over 3 years is also extremely significant in the history of India's struggle for freedom. This is how it began. An I.C.S. probationer, Subhas Chandra, then a young man of 24, wrote from Cambridge a long letter to Chittaranjan, on the 16th February 1921, introducing himself and his background and telling him of his intention to resign his service and work under his leadership for the country. He wrote, "I want to know what work you can give me in the service of the motherland. I have not much education or experience, but I have got the energy of a young man. I am not married . . . The wave of patriotism you have raised in India has reached Britain as well . . . For service and sacrifice on the altar of the motherland, you are the principal personality. I present myself to you with whatever little learning. intelligence, power and zeal I may possess. I have not much to dedicate at the feel of the motherland except my body and mind . . . To me it appears that a vast field of work lies before the Congress. If you depute me, I can also be of some help to you."

Of course Deshbandhu accepted this offer of service with alacrity, as he has done in the case of thousands of young men who at this time volunteered to work under him for the attainment of Swaraj.

19th November was the date of the arrival of the Prince of Wales at Bombay and it was decided that peaceful *hartal* would be observed on that day all over India. There was plenty of enthusiasm and excitment in the country. The leaders were anxious lest violence should crupt and they took all case to make the *hartal* peaceful. Mahatma remained in Bombay on that day but in spite of his presence, riots broke out there on that day. In Calcutta the story was different. The *hartal* was

complete and absolutely peaceful, and the city wore a perfectly deserted look. The government did not remain idle, they raided the Congress and Khilafat offices in the city in the morning and prohibited public meetings. The success of the *hartal* filled the heart of the people with joy and that of the authorities with fear and anxiety. And as Deshbandhu left Calcutta for Surat to attend the Working Committee meeting, to be held on 22nd and 23rd November, the Commissioner of Police issued a notification prohibiting public meetings, demonstrations and processions for three months.

The Working Committee in its meeting at Surat authorised provincial committees to start civil disobedience movement, if they were satisfied that it would remain non-violent and peaceful. Bengal was boiling for a fight and the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee invested Deshbandhu, in its meeting on 27th November with full powers to start and lead the movement. It was decided that batches of five volunteers each would defy the orders and hawk khadi in the streets. For each batch there should be one scout who would watch from a distance so that he could give information to the Congress office if anyone was arrested. Also. *hartal* was to be observed on the 24th December when the Prince was due to arrive at the city. Five thousand volunteers were enrolled, and Deshbandhu's only son, Chiraranjan, offered himself as a volunteer. Promptly the volunteers were declared illegal in Bengal as they were declared in U.P. also. Deshbandhu's message to Bengal rang through the whole country : "I feel the handcufis on my wrists and weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agency of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left ? What matters it whether I am dead or alive ?"

The programme of Civil Disobedience movement took effect on 3rd December when ten batches of volunteers went out and hawked khadi in the streets. On the first two days no one was arrested, but presently arrests started. His son, Chiraranjan, was arrested shortly and taken to prison. Deshbandhu forbade sending special food and bedding to his son in jail, and wanted him to share hardship with the rest. On 7th December, Deshbandhu's wife, Basanti Debi, and his sister, Urmila Devi, proceeded to hawk khadi in the streets like the rest and they, too,

were arrested. The arrest of Basanti Debi moved the whole province to its depths. Thousands of people, young and old, Hindu and Muslim, students and teachers, office employees, factory workers, and others joined the movement, and even some policemen, who saw Basanti Debi taken in a prison van, bowed to her in reverence, and decided to resign their jobs. Though the arrested ladies were quietly released at night and sent home, they repeated their performance. As the date of the Prince's arrival at Calcutta approached, the government was anxious to come to terms with Deshbandhu. Lord Ronaldshay had a meeting with him and urged upon him to stop the *hartal* but failed to get him to agree. On 10th December, he himself was arrested and put to custody in the Presidency jail. During leave-taking, he forbade his daughter to send special food for him in prison; he must share the same food and treatment as was given to his comrades in prison. On the same day, he was produced before the Magistrate and the case was adjourned till 20th January 1922. In the meantime, thousands of people, including his lieutenants, had courted imprisonment and the prison was full to overflowing.

During this time when he was an under-trial prisoner in jail, a very important event took place. Lord Reading, the new Viceroy, opened secret negotiations, partly to avoid a demonstration on 24th December in Calcutta when the Prince of Wales would arrive. He came personally to Calcutta. Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was the go-between, visited Deshbandhu in prison and the latter was allowed to have telephone talks with Mahatmaji, was still outside the prison and other colleagues. Deshbandhu agreed to the calling-off of the *hartal* and the movement on condition that the government should agree to release all political prisoners and to convene a round table conference to discuss the question of Swaraj, Khilafat, and the Punjab wrongs. But Mahatmaji was lukewarm, and when he agreed at last, it was too late. The Viceroy had left the city and the Viceregal Council had concluded its deliberations. The Prince came and the *hartal* war observed as peacefully and completely as on the earlier occasion on 19th November.

Deshbandhu's trial took place inside the Civil Jail for fear of great rush of people to which the proceedings. He was given six months' sentence and sent to the jail where he found his son,

Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel and Hakim Ajmal Khan supported it, but Dr. Ansari, Rajagopalachari and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar were against it. When the Report was published, he said, "Reformed Councils are really a mask which the bureaucracy has put on. I conceive it our clear duty to tear those masks off its face. To end these Councils will be the most effective boycott. It is possible to achieve this if we get a majority. If we stand for elections in the beginning of 1923, the results will show that we have proceeded upon facts and not upon assumptions. I am sure of a majority for men of our views."

Next session of the Congress was held at Gaya with Deshbandhu as President. In spite of his closely-reasoned masterly address in support of his programme of council-entry, the resolution on council-entry was lost and he resigned the Presidenship. He had the courage and confidence to declare then that, though he was defeated, he was sure to get the country round to his view before the next year was out. On 1st January 1923, immediately resigning the Presidenship, Desabandhu and Pandit Motilal formed the Swarajya Party with the programme of council-entry as the main plank in its platform.

The opposition that Deshbandhu encountered in the press and on the platform, from old opponents as well as former sympathisers and co-workers, even in Bengal and elsewhere, on this issue of council-entry, is incredible. But he had a leonine courage, and even though in a very weak health, he disregarded all physical hardships and discomforts and went on preaching his ideas and organising his party. A great admirer of Browning, he was an incorrigible optimist and "ever a fighter". And he readily accepted the challenge of the formidable opponents.

The Congress was thus divided into what were called the pro-changer, i.e., the Swarajists and the no-changers, who stuck to the programme of civil disobedience movement and the boycott of the councils. The latter misjudged the situation in the country and did not realize the extent of gloom and demoralisation that had set in with the suspension of the movement in February 1922. Anyhow, a temporary compromise was effected between the two sections on the terms that propaganda regarding council-entry would be suspended on both sides till 30th April 1923, both sections would be free to work the remaining part of their respective programme without interference and each would cooperate

with the other in raising funds for constructive work. Shortly after 30th April, by which time no civil disobedience movement could be started by the no-changers, Deshbandhu started his campaign with a whirlwind tour of the country as he did in 1921 to push his programme and propagate his idea of council-entry. As he predicted at Gaya, he got the vast majority of the Congress delegates round to his view at the Special Congress held at Delhi in September 1923. In his speech he called the councils "things of falsehood". He would remove them and wreck the Reforms from within the councils by making it impossible for the government to work them. He declared, "I will have nothing to do with those who go there for the sake of posts. . .I abhor that. I abominate that. I say that either I stand there to wreck the Reforms. . . or do not go there at all. If in a minority I will keep these seats vacant like so many lamps of non-cooperation burning. . ."

After the Special Congress at Delhi, both Deshbandhu and Pandit Motilal toured U.P. and then the former came back to Calcutta and undertook another tour of his province. He and his men worked day and night to get their nominees elected to the Bengal Legislative Council. In this matter, *Forward*, the daily paper he had started on October 23, 1923, did yeoman's service. Veteran public men suffered defeats in the elections at the hands of comparatively unknown candidates sponsored by the Swarajya Party, which achieved great success not only in Bengal but also in the Central Assembly to which among others, two of the stalwart leaders of the Swarajya Party, Pandit Motilal and Vithal Bhai Patel, were elected. He captured even seats reserved for Muslims in Bengal. His party entered the Bengal Council in such numbers that the Governor, Lord Lytton, invited him on 11 December to form a Ministry, but he declined on the ground that his party entered Councils to wreck the reforms not to work them. This the party cannot do by accepting office. "The party is aware," he said in his letter to the Governor, "that it is possible to offer obstruction from within by accepting office, but they do not consider it honest to accept office which is under the existing system in your Excellency's gift and then turn it into an instrument of obstruction." He added that the country demanded change in the present system and unless it was effected, the people could not offer willing cooperation.

The Swarajya Party met in Lucknow in January 1924 under the Presidentship of Deshbandhu, formulated national demands to be presented in the Central Assembly, which included the release of all political prisoners and detenus; repeal of repressive laws; summoning a national convention to decide the principles for framing the future Constitution of India.

One of the first things—a most bold and statesmanlike act—he did after entering the Bengal Council was to conclude a Hindu-Muslim Pact known as "The Bengal Pact" to unite the two communities on the basis of equality and justice. The main provisions of the pact were that : (1) representation in tae Council should be ultimately through a joint electorate on the population basis; (2) special weightage in services were to be given to Muslims till they obtain posts according to their proportion in the population. While the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee approved of the pact, in the All India Congress Committee he encountered great opposition, but decision was deferred, and its consideration postponed. The Bengal Pact united the two communities in Bengal against the government, and Deshbandhu succeeded in defeating the government repeatedly on important issues and throwing out three successive ministries, thereby dealing a deathblow to Dyarchy.

After the election to the Councils, Deshbandhu decided to contest the elections to the Calcutta Corporation also. Under the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923, franchise was widened and the Corporation become a democratic body with eighty-five councillors, five Aldermen, and a Mayor elected by the councillors and the Aldermen. Thanks to Deshbandhu's untiring energy and hard work, victory came to the Swaraja Party, whose members captured a large majority of the seats. Deshbandhu himself was elected Mayor and Subash Chandra Bose appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation with the responsibility to implement the ambitious programme of work he had drawn up for the city : "free primary education, free medical relief to the poor, purer and cheaper food and milk supply, better supply of unfiltered water, better sanitation and housing for the poor, improved transport and greater efficiency in administration."

In February 1924, Gandhiji came out of prison and though he did not at first approve of the programme of council-entry, he did not want Congressmen to obstruct the Swarajists.

An important event in Bengal took place when the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress was held at Serajganj in May 1924. At this meeting when doubts were expressed about the Bengal Pact he spoke for hours and convinced the delegates of its efficacy. Another controversial issue was the resolution on Gopinath Saha, a young revolutionary who shot dead Mr. Day, an innocent Britisher, mistaking him for Mr. Tegart, the Police Commissioner of Calcutta, who was notorious for inhumanly torturing and beating young men arrested for revolutionary activities. Deshbandhu did not believe in violence as an effective method to bring about Swaraj, but his admiration for the example of suffering, self-sacrifice and self-immolation, set by these young people for their motherland was boundless. During his professional career he had saved and helped so many of them, and known of their heroic self-immolation almost at first hand. Some of the people have now eschewed the path of violence and become his followers. And his heart went out in sympathy for these young men who might be called "misguided" by some people but whose love for the motherland was incomparable. The resolution which was passed was worded like this : "This Conference while denouncing and disassociating itself from violence and adhering to the principle of non-violence, appreciates Gopinath Saha's ideal of self-sacrifice, misguided though it is in respect of the country's best interests and expresses its respects for his great self-sacrifice." "Gandhiji," as Dr. Rajendraprasad writes, "did not like this resolution because actions like these were not in tune with the Congress policy of non-violence and impeded the freedom movement." It is true that Gandhiji did not command this rosolution and at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad in June, Gopinath Saha resolution was defeated, nevertheless in the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931, a far stronger resolution was passed praising "the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo, and Rajguru, who had to give up their lives for revolutionary violence." Gandhiji did not express his disapproval at this resolution, nor opposed it though he was present there. Similarly, he did not suspend his movement in 1930 and 1942, on the ground of violence of his followers as he did in February 1922 when violence had erupted at Chauri-Chaura.

Deshbandhu's activity was not confined to work in the Council, Corporation, and Congress only. He and his party

even launched movement against corruption in religious places. He rousen public feelings and started Satyagraha against the Mohant of Tarakeswar who had earned notoriety by abusing his authority and privilege. The government, as usual, supported the Mohant, but Deshbandhu sent batch after batch of volunteers offering Satyagraha. In this movement, he was helped by a number of his ex-revolutionary lieutenants of whom Surendra Mohan Ghose was most prominent. At last the Mohant had to resign and one of his disciples became the new Mohant who agreed to accept the Congress decision.

Victory after victory had been achieved by Deshbandhu since the Gaya Congress in 1922, but not without a hard and bitter struggle and intolerable physical hardship, resulting in loss and ruin of his health. Indeed his health, never very strong, had been shattered, though he did not care. His body was too frail for his fiery spirit. Whatever great things he had been achieving were all due to his exceptionally strong will—"will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

He went to Simla for recovery of health and then on 25th October 1924, a heavy blow fell on him and his party. On that day about one hundred and fifty ot his most dynamic lieutnants all over Bengal were arrested by an Ordinance promulgated for the purpose and detained without trial. Among them, there were Subhas Chandra Bose, Satyendra Chandra Mitra, Anil Baran Roy, Surendra Mohan Ghose, and many others, who by their dynamism and devoted work proved a tower of strength to Deshbandhu. On hearing the news, in spite of his extreme ill-health, he rushed to Calcutta and presided over the meeting at the Calcutta Corporation to protest against the detention of the Chief Executive Officer and others and condemned what he called the "violence of the Government" which have passed this lawless law and put people behind the prison bars without any trial or even any charge framed against them. At his request, nearly all the prominent all-India leaders, Mahatmaji Pandit Motilal, and others came to Calcutta. Mahatma was now convinced that the Swarajya Party's thundering success in the Bengal Council had led to the promulgation of this Ordinance and the arrest of the pick of Deshbandhu's dynamic followers in order to cripple the party. A statement signed by Mahatmaji, Deshbandhu and Pandit Motilal was issued and among other things they epxressed

the need of adopting the programme of the Swarajya Party as the main programme of the Congress. The next Congress session at Belgaum accepted the Swarajist programme as its main political programme. Deshbandhu's stand at Amritsar, Calcutta, Nagpur, and Gaya was vindicated at last as he succeeded in getting his point of view accepted by the Mahatma and the Congress on the policy of council-entry as an effective strategy in the struggle against the Government.

Belgaum Congress in December 1924 was the last session of the Congress Deshbandhu was ever to attend. He was having temperature and suffering from bilious colic, but the council session was approaching when the bill to regularise the Bengal Ordinance would be discussed. He was too ill to attend the Council, but his spirit would not submit to the compulsions of the body, and he insisted on being carried to the council chamber on a stretcher. His wife was not allowed to accompany him. Luckily Dr. B.C. Roy and Dr. J.M. Das Gupta were sitting members of the Council and they sat by his side in the Council as his medical attendants. The bill was defeated and he left Calcutta towards the end of January for complete rest.

Though he had not recovered, he attended the next session of the Council in March, defeated the government and threw out the bill to grant salaries to the Ministers, now for the third time, and killed Dyarchy in Bengal. He said,

"We want a living Constitution, a free Constitution, a Constitution in which honourable men can work with honourable friends. . . .

"The effect of killing Dyarchy will enable us to build the beautiful mansion to which I have referred.

"It is not very difficult to understand that if you feel that a Government must mean a government by the people, for the people and for the good of the people, the Ministers under the present system will serve no purpose.

"I will venture to think that no Government in the world—Conservative or Labour or Liberal—no Government in the world can ever dispute the will of a great country like India."

This was to be his last speech in the Bengal Legislative Council.

Deshbandhu's munificence—his gifts, charities, donations—have become a legend in the country. He not only gave from

what he earned, but always borrowed if necessary to relieve people from their want, if he had no money, He gave and borrowed for his party. Later he had also to borrow for his treatment. There remained nothing except huge debts and his palatial residence at Bhowanipore—at one time the seat of a literary circle; the place of performance of devotional songs and kirtans; the haunt of political workers and applicant for gifts and charities; the great "guest house" for all the greatest leaders of the country from 1905 till his death. This house he now gave to the nation. On 2nd May, the Provincial Conference at Faridpur was to be held, and when Mahatmaji, who also was to attend, reached Calcutta on 1st May, Deshbandhu had already left for Faridpur. That afternoon, learning of the great gift of this, his last possession to the nation, Gandhiji said at a meeting in what is now known as the Sradhananda Park. "I was overwhelmed with grief when I came to the house today. That house—a beautiful mansion—no longer belongs to Deshbandhu. He has placed it in the hands of the trustees in order to divest himself of the last vestige of wealth that he possessed in this world. I could not help shedding tears when I thought of him. He has not yet been able to repair his health. With his broken down constitution, he has gone to Faridpur in advance. I cannot easily conceive of such stupendous sacrifice of everything one may call one's own."

His great speech at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur—it was his last speech—was in the nature of a swan song. An indescribable feeling of peace and serenity came over him. The eagle had closed its wings.

In his spsech, he tried to define "Swaraj" and distinguish it from independence, which means India's freedom from British rule. "To my mind," he said, "Swaraj implies, firstly, that we must have the freedom of working out the consolidation of the diverse elements of the Indian people; secondly, we must proceed with this work on national lines—not going back two thousand years ago, but going forward in the light and in the spirit of our national genius and temperament."

He stressed the "problem of consolidating the many apparently conflicting elements which go to make up the Indian people." Ho added that "this work of consolidation is a long process . . . but without this non Swaraj is possible. Herein lies the great wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive

programme."

He also enlarged upon the origin of violence in India's political struggle, and of the revolutionary movement, and with considerable research, demonstrated how apathy, greed, arrogance, exploitation, and orgy of violence in the ruler begot this spirit of violence in the people. A change of heart in both the government and the revolutionary was necessary if the government wanted co-operation. The government should drop its discretionary powers, declare an amnesty of political prisoners and "guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth, within the near future, and that in the meantime till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation of such Swaraj should be laid at once. . . I believe that with a change of heart on the part of the govenment, there is bound to be produced a change in the mental outlook of the revolutionary, and with settlement such as I have described, the revolutionary movement will be a thing of the past, and the very power and energy which is now directed against the government will be devoted to the real service of the people."

One of the most important points he made in this speech was the question of Swaraj within the empire. He said that the answer to the question whether the ideal of Swaraj was to be realised within the empire or outside it had always been given by the Congress in the following terms : "within the Empire if the Empire will recognize our rights, and outside ihe Empire if it does not". He added, "we must have opportunity to live our life, opportunity for self-realisation, self-development, and self-fulfilment. The question is of living our life. If the Empire furnishes sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred. If, on the contrary, the Empire, like the Car of Juggernaut, crushes our life in the sweep of its imperialistic march, there will be justification for the idea of the establishment of Swaraj outside the Empire."

He then explained the "many advantages" of the Empire idea. According to him, Dominion Status was not servitude but an alliance and free alliance necessarily carried with it the right of separation. He thought "after the war, it is generally believed that it is only as as a great Confederation that the Empire or its component parts can live. It is realised that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation, and the Dominion

Status, while it affords complete protction to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realise itself, develop itself and fulfil itself, and, therefore, it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned."

Already, years before, he had seen the vision of an Asiatic Federation. Now it was expanded into that of a Federation of the whole world. He said :

> "To me the idea is specially attractive because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world peace, in the ultimate Federation of the World; and I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilisation, distinct mental outlook—if properly led by the statesmen at the helm—is bound to make lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits the statesmen, the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can concive—the Federation of the Human Race. . . . which involves apparent sacrifice on the part of the constituent nations, and it certainly involves the giving up for good the Empire idea, with its ugly attributes of domination." He thought the world was tired of conflicts and desired construction and consolidation and he wanted British statesmen to rise to occasion and "have peace today on terms that are honourable both to you and to us." His message to the people of Bengal was : "You have made great sacrifices for daring to win political freedom, and on you has fallen the brant of official wrath. The time is not yet for putting aside you political weapons. *Fight hard and fight clean*; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, enter the Peace Conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity. Nationalism is merely a process in self-realisation, self-development and self-fulfilment. It is not an end in itself. The growth and development of nationalism is necessary so that humanity may realise itself, develop itself, and fulfil itfelf; and I be a seech you, when you discuss the terms of settlement, don not forget the larger claim of humanity in your pride of

nationalism." And then he concluded giving his people a clear vision of what he seeks :

"I seek a Federation of the States of India : each free to follow—as it must follow—the culture and the tradition of its own people : each bound to each in the common service of all : a great federation within a great federation—the Federation of Free Nations—whose freedom is the measure of their service to Man and whose unity the hope of peace among the people of the earth."

Thus ended this great speech, one of the noblest, which any statesman, living or dead, would have been proud to make. It is significant that the outgoing Viceroy Lord Reading remarked to a journalist on the eve of his departure from India late in 1925. "We have lost the chance of reconciliation with C.R. Das's death." The country had to wait for another 22 years to reach this reconciliation based on Deshbandhu's terms.

In the meantime, his own end was approaching fast. He was a sick man, a dying man. Friends, relatives, physicians implored him to go to Europe for recovery. But he had no money; he would not accept any from the party funds. When some time back he was requested by friends, well-wishers and partymen to take a few briefs, which in a very few days would assure him at least a few hundred thousand rupees, he had spurned the idea: not for his health, not for his life, not even for party funds he would on the barrister's gown again.

He was removed to Darjeeling and at the entreaties of a personal friend, Sir N.N. Sarkar, he accepted the latter's hospitality and stayed at his house there. To this house Step Aside' Gandhiji came to see him and stayed with him for five days. He was having attacks of fever intermittently. In a latter to Pandit Motilal Nehru, his closest personal friend for the last few years, he said that he was having an attack of fever once every week. Even this letter –"a long letter of five closely written pages, all in his own handwriting"—was full of matters relating to the country; the critical time that was coming; of what might come out of the Birkenhead-Reading conversations, etc. etc. At about 3 o'clock in the early hours of the morning of 14th June, he had another attack of fever after some short respite, and there was much shivering and intense pain in his shoulders, arms, waist,

and in the legs. On the 16th June, temperature fell below normal and he was sinking. Oxygen did him no good. The struggle ended at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and with the name of his beloved Lord on his lips, he breathed his last.

Such was the end of the man who is often compared by his fond countrymen to Lord Budha who renounced the world and became a *Sannyasi* to rid the world of sorrow and misery. It is a fitting comparison; for he too had given up his all for his people and become a *Sanayasi*. He too had love and compassion which knew no limit; even the born criminal and the fallen woman, so hated in society, were sure of his love and sympathy. To this magnanimous man, no one was undeserving of love and forgiveness and charity—not even his veteran enemy or the cheat who swindled him or the betrayer who betrayed his trust.

He was a fit representative of Bengal's culture at its varied best, of whose uniqueness he expatiated often and felt so proud —a culture which enriched the mosaic pattern of Indian culture. Born in the land of *Navya-Nyaya* (The New Logic), he had an exceptionally brilliant and incisive intellect; a followers of Chaitanya, his love for his follow men and devotion to his Lord were marked with a sweetness of humility, typical of a real *Visanava*. The *Sakta* element in his make-up found a kinship with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda, and his life-long friend. Shri Aurobindo. Bankim taught him to see vision of the Mother in his Motherland, and he was enchanted by the divine effulgence of her beauty and sought to bring her down from the dreamland of the master and set her on the endless fields of Bengal and her cottages and homes. During the last years of his life he reminded us of the cyclonic energy and the indomitable spirit of Swami Vivekananda, who would never accept defeat or failure and whose fiery soul consumed his frail body, which after all was a "tenement of clay", A man of religion and spirituality, even politics was a part of his religion, and as a statesman he could not only concentrate on a short-term goal for his country and achieve it in record time and lay the foundation of a stable future, but also look far, very far into the future, and like a Prophet, see the vision of a great Federation of Man in the making in the evolution and attainment of Swaraj for his countrymen.

Towards the end of his life, with ruined health, he set himself a task of heroic struggle, and worked harder than his body could bear, and the strain killed him. But the legacy he left in death remains deathless.

31

MR. C.R. DAS INTERVENES FROM GAOL

KRISHNA DAS

On the day that Mahatmaji sent his reply to Pandit Malaviya's message of December 16th, there came by wire a joint request from Messrs. C.R. Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from the Calcutta Presidency Gaol, where they had been lodged as under-trial prisoners. On the 10th December at 4-30 p.m. Mr. C.R. Das and Mulana Azad had both been arrested ostensibly under the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which had made all volunteer organisations unlawful, and the enlistment of volunteers illegal, Both Mr. C.R. Das and Mulana Azad, one a Hindu and the head of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and the other a Muslim, the head of the Bengal Khilafat Committee, were conducting in Bengal the great non-co-operation movement, when they were arrested under the Criminal Law Amemdment Act. That "Act" was a "new law" passed in 1901 to circumvent anarchists and other revolutionaries. But it had never been intended to serve the purpose of suppressing peaceful political associations, which worked in the broad light of day, and whose watchword was "non-violence." But the need of coercing the people of India into according a popular welcome to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and so to deal a death blow to the movement of non-co-operation and the commanding popularity of its great leader was felt by the Government of Lord Reading to be so imperative as to demand the sweeping away of all other considerations, whether of law or of morals. The Act by a fiat of the Governor-General was set in motion, and the elementary right of free association and speechs without which no organised political

work as possible, was taken away, while at the same time it was paraded both by Lord Reading, the Viceroy, and Lord Ronaldshay, the Bengal Governor, that nothing was being done by the Government except discharging the elementary function all civilised Government, namely, the preservation of Law and Order and the protection of all lawabiding citizens. Thus it was that Mr. C.R. Das and Maulana Azad, and thousands upon thousands of other Non-co-operators, were thrown into prison, in order that the Congress boycott of the Prince's welcome might be nullified ; and without even the slightest pricking of the official conscience.

The joint message from Messrs Das and Azad has been already reproduced as telegram No. III. It was an Express telegram which reached the Ashram on the evening of 19th December about 8-30 p.m. It arrived sometime after Mahatmaji had wired back to Pandit Malaviyaji his reply to the latter's Allahabad telegram dated the 16th December (Telegrm No. I). The joint telegram made the terms contained in Panditji's message of 16th December more explicit, more definite and categorical. Nevertheless, there was one outstanding difference between the two telegrams. For in Panditji's telegram (No. I) we notice that Mahatmaji was required not only "to withdraw opposition to the Prince's welcome," but also "to suspend Civil Disobedience." This last condition is absent in the gaol telegram from Messrs. Das and Azad Pandit Malaviya repeated, as we shall see, these two conditions of his in a subsequent telegram to Mahatmaji, namely telegram No. V.

As will be seen, the joint telegram begins with the words. "We recommed calling off *hartal* on following conditions." In other words, immediate request of the joint authors was that the Calcutta *hartal*, which was fixed for 24th December, the date on which the Prince was to enter Calcutta was to be abandoned, if the Government of Lord Reading accepted certain conditions enumerated in their telegram. Nothing was said either in this telegram or in the Allahabad telegram from Panditji, was had preceded it on 16th December, as to whether or how far the Vicerory had been consulted in the matter. Mahatmaji was kept in the dark as to the actual negotiations, if any, with the Government or the Viceroy. Mahatmaji was, as it were sought to be stampeded into compliance with what appeared to be a rather peremptory request, seeing that he was wholy ignorant of all the attendant circustances the had gone to the formulation to the request. As will be

presectly seen, the reply which he gave to the joint authors had to be so drafted as to bring out the real implications of the joint message, although it took the shape of Mahatmaji's laying down certain additional terms of his own.

This is the first general comment on this joint telegram (No. III), which strikes one at the very outset. Then with regard to the specific conditions following on the request for the calling off of the Congress boycott of the Princes' visit, the obvious considerations applicable to them taken as a whole may be stated as follows : The objective of the non-co-operation campaign was the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs, and the attainment of Swaraj, or to use the technical language employed by Congresmen, that objective was the "enforcement of the Triple Demand of the Congress." The *hartal*, or the ban on the Prince's visit, was also for the time being a vital part of the political campaign of non-co-operation; firstly, because the visit was engineered by the authorities as against public opinion, as represented by the Indian National Congress; and secondly, because any real seccess of that visit would have spelt either the defeat or would have tended seriously to injure, the popular movement. Therefore, what struck Mahatmaji was that before he could think of lifting the boycott, he must be clear in his mind as to whether, or how far, there was any real desire in the mind of the Vicerory to come to a settlement with the No-co-operators. Were the authors of the joint telegram justified (when they made the proposal of a Round Table Concerence to be convened by the Viceroy) in holding that the latter was favourably disposed towards the consideration of the redress of the two wrongs in question, and also towards the recognition of the country's claim to Swaraj ? Or was the withdrawal of the popular ban on the Prince's reception the real and primary objective with the Vicreoy ? Therefore, as there no danger of the country being misled, or the whole movement being side-tracked, if the leaders proceded to parley with the Government for a Round Table Conference, without clearly understanding or ascertaining beforehand what was really at the back of their mind ?

Such are the general considerations which struck Mahatmaji as highly relevant, and suggested the particular answers which he gave to Mr. C.R. Das in respect to each one of the several clauses of his telegram. And first of all Mr. Das had laid down that the

"Government should call a conference soon to consider all questions raised by the Congress." Now, what struck Mahatmaji here was that although Mr. Das's telegram demanded in advance his sanction for the cancellation of the Calcutta *hartal,* there was nothing said about such essentials as the composition, the date, or the power of the proposed conference. Evidently, Mr. Das was prepared to withdraw the Congress boycott in anticipation of the Government convening an undefined conference. For, judging by the words of his telegram, he would be satisfied only if the conference was summoned "soon." But Mahatmaji's point was that he could not commit himself to the calling off of *hartal* without first of all ascertaining the date of the conference, the composition, i.e., personnel of the conference, and also of the terms of reference. That was Mahatmaji's answer to the first of the "conditions" —mentioned in the joint telegram. Hence in the first part of his reply to the joint telegram, Mahatmaji said, "Composition, date of conference, etc., should be previously determined."

The second condition laid down in the gaol telegram was,— "Withdrawal by the Government of their recent communique and Police and Magisterial orders." So far as this condition was concerned, Mahatmaji accepted it as essential under the circumstances of the situation. Neverthless, it is needful to appropriate the full implications of this second propositions or condition advocated by Messrs. Das and Azad. What this condition said was simply this, —The Government was to withdraw or cancel only the repressive measures inaugurated under this provisions or what the joint authors call "this new law" in the next succeeding clause of the telegram. "This new law," namely, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908, was, as we have seen, arbitrurily employed to take away the elementary right of the people for forming peaceful associations, and the enlistment and organisation of volunteers on peaceful lines. And it had been put into operation by all the Local Governments and Administrations after the arrival of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, with a view to disband the then existing volunteers organisations, prevent the enlistment of fresh volunteers, and so help in stopping the mouths of the people and their spokesmen, and nullifying the Congress boycott. Thus, if Mahatmaji, in compliance with the wishes of the joint authors of the gaol telegram had consented to lift the Congress ban, the immediate object of the Government (namely, that which was

aimed at by setting in motion or application to the different Provinces of "this new law") would have been gained as by a masterstroke of political diplomacy.

But beyond this triumph of political manoeuvre that would thus be achieved by the Government of Lord Reading by his skill in compelling the Non-co-operators to give up their boycott of the Prince under the lash, so to say of Criminal Law Amendment Act notifications and Police and Magisterial orders issued thereunder, there is a more vital issue involved. And a reference to this would make it abundantly clear that the withdrawal by the Government of "this new law" following on the lifting of the Congress boycott was not such a simple matter of political arithmetic, as it might otherwise appear. And to begin with, it must be observed that the Prince's visit (against which the *hartal* was launched) was a definite act of State, and not a mere pleasure trip. It embodied a deep-laid political objective, which was, as has already been mentioned, the bringing about the collapse of the national movement, and the popularity of its great leader Mahatma Gandhi, through the evoking of the loyal mass-feeling, followed by a wave of popular demonstrations in favour of the Heir-Apparent. Having seen through the game, and understanding that the visit of the Prince had been intended to be a sort of a flank attack on the N.C.O. movement, Mahatma Gandhi could not agree to Mr. C.R. Das's proposal for the calling off of the Calcutta *hartal*, which had been fixed for December 24 (1921), the date for the entry of the Prince into Calcutta. The cancellation of the boycott, in Mahatmaji's considered judgment, was possible only when it was unmistakably clear that the Government was not playing their own game in the matter of a Round Table Conference; in other words, when there was every chance of an "honest conference" between the representatives of the Government and those of the people.

In this way we find Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Reading each entrenched behind his own position, and each unwilling to do anything which would jeopardise his particular interests. Looked at from this point of view, the inwardness of the whole series of telegrams addressed to Mahatmaji and of his replies thereto would appear in a clear light. But more specially would this view-point reveal the inner significance of the particular additional stipulations which Mahatmaji laid down as a pre-condition to his

calling off of the *hartal* with special reference to the third and last clause or condition embodied in Mr. C.R. Das's telegram.

This last condition ran thus : "Releasing all prisoners under this new law unconditionally." Now, what does this unconditional release of prisoners "under this new law" mean and imply ? It meant only the unconditional release of Non-co-operators, who, like Messrs. Das and Azad, had been cast into prison under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. But there were other non-co-operating leaders and workers, who had been cast into prison under the Seditious Meetings Act, or under sections of the Penal Code, or of the Criminal Procedure Code. If the third condition formulated by Mr. Das was agreed to by Mahatmaji, then the last mentioned class of Non-co-operators must continue to remain in prison. And among these were men like Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab; as also Maulanas Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, Dr. Kitchlew, and indeed the whole body of the Karachi prisoners who had been convicted on November 1, 1921 for having taken part in the All-India Khilafat Conference held at Karachi on July 8, 1921 where a certain resolution regarding military service had been passed. These, as we have seen, were known as the *Futwa* prisoners. Mahatmaji was unable to understand why if the Government should at all agree to settlement, there should be this marked distinction, in the matter of treatment to be meted out to these different clauses of prisoners, who had all gone to prison while engaged in the campaign of non-co-operating workers and leaders who had been convicted for directing the volunteer organisations in the interest of the Congress boycott of the Prince's visit, upon their undertaking to cease to take part in such activities, would that be any evidence to show that the Government was really anxious for a settlement of "all questions raised by the Congress," which, according to the joint telegram, was to form the subject-matter of the proposed Round Table Conference. If the *hartal* was withdraw by Mahatmaji, the object-of the Government's waging a war against the volunteers engaged in the work of promoting the *hartal* would have been engaged. While on the other hand, the Non-co-operators gained nothing except a vague promise from the Government to hold a conference about whose date, personnel, or terms of reference, nothing was known or ascertained.

From the point of view, therefore, of Mahatmaji, the essential question was—Was the proposed Round Table Conference going

to be a genuine or an honest conference; or was it to be a sham conference and a make-believe ? If it was to be of the first kind, then the Government should find it easy to do two things—(1) Give some valid assurance about the date, composition, and terms of the conference; and (2) agree not only to release unconditionally the non-co-operating convicted prisoners under this new law,' but also non-co-operating prisoners convicted under other penal laws, and especially the class of prisoners known as the Karachi *Futwa* prisoners. The fact of the matter is that if Mahatmaji could once be convicted that the Government of Lord Reading was truly anxious for a settlement of the triple Congress demand; in other words, if he was clear in his mind that there was a real change of their heart, then he would have felt no hesitation in acceding to the proposals of Mr. C.R. Das and of Pandit Malaviyaji.

Under the circumstances, therefore, Mahatmaji felt that he would be afixing his signature to a blank cheque, if he agreed to Mr. Das's proposal. Mr. Das's Express telegram (No. III) was received at the Ahmedabad Telegram Office at 7-10 P.M. 19th December; and by Mahatmaji an hour after, the same evening. The reply which Mahatmaji gave was despatched immediatety after, that very evening to Mr. Das at his Calcutta address, Presidency Gaol. What Mahatmaji said in reply was that in his opinion the date, composition, etc., of the conference should first be settled; and secondly, the releases should include the "Futwa" prisoners. If the Government accepted these two conditions in addition to those already mentioned by Mr. Das, then alone, according to Mahatmaji, could the Calcutta *hartal* be cancelled.

32

DESHABANDHU DAS—PATRIOT PAR EXCELLENCE

J.L. DAS

Lawyers of our country can take justifiable pride in the fact that members of their profession played the most significant role in the country's struggle for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation, Deshabandhu Chiitaranjan Das and a galaxy of other nationalist leaders belonged to the Bar at one period or other of their lives. Since this is the birth centenary year of Deshabandhu, may resume shall primarily deal with his services and sacrifices towards liberating the country from servitude.

After his graduation from the Presidency College, Calcutta in 1890, Chittaranjan proceeded to England to compete for the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) Examination. But as he himself jocularly remarked, "I appeared at the examination but headed the list of the unsuccessful". Though according to his friends Mr. J.N. Gupta I.C.S. "he had no political proclivities at the time," yet Chittaranjan could not tolerate denigration of India by arrogant Englishmen. Standing on British soil as a student he asserted, "Gentlemen, I am sorry to find it given expression to in Parliamentary speeches on more than one occassion that England conquered India by the sword and by the sword must she keep it to argue that the policy of the sword is the only policy that ought to be pursued in India is, to my mind, absolutely base and quite unworthy of an Englishman." He also gave a fitting retort to Lord Salisbury who disparagingly called Dadabhai Naoroji, then contesting a British Parliamentary seat, "that

blackman of India".

Chittaranjan qualified himself as a Barrister at-Law and returned home in 1894. Though in the initial stages he had his full share of struggles and frustrations in the legal profession, yet he did not hesitate to take up what were popularly known as Swadeshi cases at considerable pecuniary sacrifice to himself. However his professional abilities came into full play in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case. Among the accused were Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, his brother Sri Barindra Kumar Ghosh Ullaskar Dutt and Hrishikesh Kanjilal, who were charged with preaching sedition and indulging in terrorist activities against His Majesty's Government in India. In a voice surcharged with emotion, C.R. Das, by which name Chittaranjan then came to be called, spoke before the European Judge of Aurobindo thus. "... I appeal to you, therefore, that a man like this who is being charged with the offence with which he has been charged, stands not only before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of history and my appeal to you is this, that long after this controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is deed and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of history."

After his titanic legal battle, C.R. Das was able to have Aurobindo acquitted. Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Ullaskar Dutta were, however, awarded the death penalty. Nothing undaunted, C.R. Das preferred an appeal before the High Court and ultimately succeeded in saving them from the hangman's noose and in having the sentences of others reduced. The remarkable oratory, forensic skill and capability ot marshalling facts which Chittaranjan displayed in the original and appeal cases, established him as one of the leading lawyers of the country. Even the then Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, Sir Laurence Jenkins, could not help showering on him the following encomium : "I desire in particular to place on record my high appreciation of the manner in which the case

was presented to the Court by their leading advocate, Mr. C.R. Das."

C.R. Das was at the zenith of his profession. Princes, millionaires and business tycoons literally knocked at his door with their briefs and offers of fabulous fees. His monthly income went up to fifty thousand rupees and even more. Even in his college days he was considered a "fashionable young man" by his friends because of his fastidiousness in dress and deportment. As a barrister he became used to "living like a prince." Besides, he gave away thousands in charities. But soon the magic spell of Mahatma Gandhi wrought a remarkable change in him. He responded to Gandhiji's call of non-violence non-cooperation and joined the bartle for the conntry's freedom. Following the adoption at the Nagpur session (1920) of the Indian National Congress of a resolution "calling upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspend their practice and to devote their attention to national service," Chittaranjan gave up his extremely lucrative practice and along with members of his family adopted a life of poverty and privation. Subsequently, he gave way all his wealth, including even his residential house, for public causes. In fact he became in the words of his ardent admirer, Kazi Nazrul Islam, the rebel poet, "a royal beggar. People throughout India came to call him endearingly, "Deshabandhu."

Eearlier, when Mrs. Annie Besant was served on July 16, 1917 with order of internment for her advocacy of Home Rule in India Chittaranjan gave vent to his strong disapproval of the government measure in these striking words, "I do not think the God and Humanity was crucified only once. Tyrants and oppressors have crucified humanity again and again and every outrage on humanity is a fresh nail driven through his sacred flesh Incidentally it might be mentioned that identical feelings were expressed dy Deshabandhu in his presidential speech at the Gaya Congress in December 1922 when he drew an analogy between the trial of Mahatma Gandhi which led to his imprisonment on March 10, 1915 and the trial of Jesus Christ before Bend Pilate. But Deshbandhu was not a man to stop at effusive rhetoric only. When the Civil Disobedience Movement started in the Deshbandhu, who had been appointed as Congress Dictator for the province, declared "I offer myself as a volunteer

in the service of the Congress." Not only this, "the leader suggested that his son and wife should go to volunteers in order to set an example to others. We opposed the idea especially on the ground that no lady should be permitted to go out as long as there was a single man left. But the leaders was adamant in his decision. So the next day young Das, who wes about the same age as myself—went out at the head of the volunteers and was at once taken into prison. There was an immediate change in the atmosphere and more volunteers began to enlist—but even that was not enough, when the turn came for Mrs. Das. Accompanied by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Urmila Devi and other associate, Miss Suniti Devi, she went at the head of volunteers. When the news realised in the city that Mrs. Das and other ladies had been taken to prison, there was much excitement. In utter indignation young and old, rich and poor began to pour in as volunteers. The authorities were alarmed and they converted the city into an armed camp. But our battle was half won . . . . So there was the excitement that before midnight this Government had to order the release of leaders. Mrs. Das and her associates, and the public where given to understand that the arrests had been made through a mistake." [Subhas Chandra Bose in *The Indian Struggle*.]

Throughout this tense drama involving members of his family, Deshabandhu remained perturbed. He exhorted the students and the youth to enlist themselves as volunteers and offer Satyagraha in these soul stirring words. "I am growing old and infirm and the battle has just commenced. They have not taken me yet, but I feel the handcuffs on my wrist and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. What matters if I am taken or left ? One thing is certain. The work of the Congress must be carried on whether I am dead or alive. With only 5000 in this great city and the work of the Congress about to be stopped ? I ask again, have the students of Calcutta no answer to give? Not long afterwards he himself was placed under arrest. As he was being led to prison, he delivered this message to the nation, "Men and women of India, this is my last message to you. Victory is in sight, if you are prepared to win it by suffering".

But the resolute struggle carried on by Deshabandhu C.R.

Das against the British Government in India did not end here. As is well known, following differences of opinion with Mahatma Gandhi and the "No changers" Deshabandhu, in collaboration with Pandit Motilal Nehru and other supporters formed the Swarajya Party, whose object was "to mend or end" the alien bureaucracy by capturing the elected seats in the legislature and all public bodies. "Where there was room for doing any solid constructive work, they could do so. But failing that, they could at least keep up a systematic opposition to the members and agents of the Government, and thereby prevent them from doing mischief." Soon the party captured the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, and Deshabandhu Das and Subhas Chandra Bose became its first Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer respectively. Thus Deshabandhu was able to bring the largest municipality in India under popular control and to initiate several beneficial measures. That Deshabandhu's patriotism rose above personal safety and health were amply borne out on several occasions. Once when he heard that the poor tea garden labourers stranded at Chandpur [now in East Pakistan] were being persecuted by the police and military personnel, he went there along with his wife. Basanti Devi, in a frail country boat [as the train and steamer services had been immobilised because of a strike] defying the hazards of a turbulent river in spate. Again on the day the Black Bill [which sought to validate the Ordinance which the Government had promulgamated in October 1924; conferring on the Bengal Governor powers of summary arrest and imprisonment without trial] was scheduled to be pushed through the Bengal Legislative Council, Deshabandhu "inspite of his ill health . . . resolved to inflict a crushing defeat on the Government in person. On the appointed day he arrived at the Council Hall in time and had actually to be carried in an invalid-chair. Once again the laurels of the day were his. The Bill was thrown out . . . . [Subhas Chandra Bose in *The Indian Struggle*].

The life of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, crowned with glorious and heroic achievements came to an end on June 16, 1921. As Prof. J.L. Banerjee so fittingly remarked "What a path of throns—no less than roses—had Deshabandhu to traverse here be came to his journey's end. His heart was like some Aeolian harp mystically attuned to the wandering airs of heaven. Even as the Aeolian harp wind—swept gives forth gusts

of melody strange, deep toned and harmonious, so from Deshabandhu's heart and the heart of common humanity there arose deep and passionate bursts of melody which filled our horizon with life and light and music so long as these lasted".

33

LIFE AND TIMES OF C.R. DAS*

VIKRAMPURI

We give below the full title of the book, which has been printed in England, and well-printed but for a few glaring errors in the spelling of personal names, in order that the reader may understand at a glance the claim that is made on its behalf by its able author, who was a class-mate of C.R. Das, and who unfortunately did not live to see the fruit of his labours in the cause of his friend and his country. The personal memoir has been interwoven with the political history, and, except towards the beginning and the end of the book, is not much in evidence. And a complete outline of the history of Bengal' resolves itself into a brief resume of the political history of India as a whole. This part of the work has been well done, and gives us a very good, if rapid, summary of the main currents of Indian politics during the period in question. The illustrations, though few, are well-executed and well-chosen and the binding and get-up are good.

The short preface gives in four paragraphs, a brilliant picture of the alleged attainments of modern Bengal in all the spheres of life, and begins thus :

> "During the life-time of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Bengal had covered the track of centuries and casting off the

*Life and Times of C R. Das : The story of Bengal's self-expression. Being a personal memoir of the late Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan and a complete outline of the History of Bengal for the first quarter of the twentieth century. By Prithwis Chandra Roy. Price Rs. 6. Oxford University Press, 1928, with seven illustrations and appendices, pp. 313.

> traditions and langour of the feudal and the Middle Ages, pushed herself forward as one of the most advanced and progressive provinces of Asia."

This patriotic eulogy seems to us to be truer in potentiality than in actual achievement, and in the very first chapter of the book, and elsewhere, the author has made no secret of the fact that Bengal has not taken very kindly to social reform, which is long overdue.

We observe with regret that the author has not been able to shake himself free from this journalistic habit of indulging in superlatives. It is always 'all Bengal' that thinks in a particular manner. 'all India' that dues this or that, 'the whole of educated India that is shocked or moved, the entire mass of the country that acts, and so on. One should have expected greater restraint in the use of words in a writer of the author's reputation.

The very first words of the book are :

> "Chitta Ranjan Das was perhaps the greatest Bengali in the first quarter of the twentieth century and the founder and builder of the best organised school of political thought in India."

We shall presently have something to say on the latter part of the claim, but as regards the first part, the claim set forth seems to us to be so preposterous as to furnish its own refutation. Something may be excused to a friend writing so soon after the death of his hero, when a proper perspective is in the nature of things impossible to obtain, but the statement cannot be said to make any reasonable approach to the verdict of history. Had it been true, the bankruptcy of Bengal in great men worked have been even greater than it is. Fortunately Bengal is not so hopelessly sterile as Mr. Ray's extravagant admiration for his friend would indicate. Even C.R. Das's native land of Vikrampur in the District of Dacca on which, by the way, our author bestows a well-deserved tribute, has produced one which in real greatness far outshines Chitta Ranjan. We need not add that we are here referring to Sir J.C. Bose. Even among politicist with whom alone the subject of Mr. Ray's memoir may fitly be compared, Bengal has produced men in many respects his superior, however, much he may have surpassed them in other respects. To confine ourselves

to Vikrampur. Manomohan Ghose and his much gifted brother Lalmohan Ghose, were political leaders of no mean merit, and in oratony which plays to large a part in politics, the latter had no superior. The contribution of another able son of Vikrampur, Guruparasad Sen, who joined politics late in life, to the history of Hinduism, marks him out as a thinker of outstanding merit. Outside Chitta Ranjan's own native district, Ananda Mohan Mukerjee, Kalicharan Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee were names to conjure with in their days, and the good which the first and the third did to the cause of Indian political regeneration, cannot be lightly esteemed. As for being the greatest all-round Bengali of the modern age, there can be no question to when the honour belongs. Rabindranath Tagore is not only one of the foremost poets of the world, but is one of our foremost political thinkers, and many of C.R. Das's assess on rural reconstruction and on the necessity of cherishing our indigenous culture and the genius of our civilization are derived from Rabindranath, who of all living Bengalis in most deeply steeped in the spirit of that culture of which he has been the most sympathetic, as well as the ablest, exponent in prose and verse that modern India has produced.

The greatest disservice that has been done to the younger generation of Bengal by the movement of which C.R. Das was the head in the love of claptrap and cheap notoriety which it has produced and the growth of something like a conviction among them that the track of long years of patient preparation and arduous toil in order to fit oneself for public service in one's chosen walk of life can be covered in a few brief months of intensive political agitation, and that emotional enthusiasm is a substitude for real hard work and strenuous endeavour. Mr. Parithwis Chandra Ray was one of those few Bengalis who did not disdain to live laborious days to prepare himself for political work, and it is all the more deplorable that in appraising the worth of his hero he has permitted himself to undulge in the language of hyperbole which can only mislead the youthful aspirant to political success. Mr. Gokhale took a saner and more serious view of politics, but unfortunately, his Servants of India Society or any other society of devoted public workers was not been able to take root in Bengal.

Long ago, Gladstone, to whom no one will deny the quality

of statesmanship, comparing himself with Tennysone, who was the recepient of the same civic honours as himself said as follows at a public gathering :

> Mr. Tennyson's life and labours correspond to term of time as nearly as possible to my own. But Mr. Tennyson's exertions have been on a higher plane of human action than my own. He has worked in a higher field, and his work will be more durable. The public men play a part which bring us in view of our countrymen; it is our duty to speak, but the words which we speak have wings and fly away and disappear. In distant times some may ask with regard to the Prime Minister, "who was he, and what did he do? We know nothing about him." The work of Mr. Tennyson is a higher order. The Poet Laureate has written his own songs in the hearts of his countrymen that can never die.

In our patriotic zeal, we must not forget what Emerson said, viz., "that country is the fairest which is inhabited by the noblest minds." Nor should we forget his truly patriotic contempt for the shallow Americanism whose prototype is so common among us in India :

> "I hate this shallow Americanism which hopes to get rich by credit, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, to learn the economy of the mind by phrenology, for skill without study, or mastery without apprenticeship. . . We countenance each other in this life to show, puffing, advertisement, and manufacture of public opinion; and excellence is lost sight of in the hunger for sudden performance and praise."

And elsewhere, addressig the American scholar, he says :

> "It becomes him to fell all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. . . the world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy.

> Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honourable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach; and bide his own time,—happy enough, if he can satisfy himself alone, that this day he has seen something truly, Success treads on every right step."

This is the kind of success which leads on to greatness, and he alone is entitled to be called great who, not born a genius, has trodden the difficult path to such success. We should learn to appreciate

> "Labour, that in lasting fruit outgraws. Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose."
>
> (Matthew Arnold)

And above all, we should always remember that in trying to achieve success leading to greatness, "not failure but low aim is crime" (Lywell).

It is well for us to remember these words and not to forget our sense of proportion is estimating the worth of a popular hero of the moment. Whether in the case of the thinker or the man of action, the supreme test of his worth is the enduring results of his work. A man may die young, but his thoughts and activities may influence untold generations and inspire them to rise to the height of their manhood and uplift the level of the race to which they belong. The extravagant and bold claim made on behalf of C.R. Das in the opening sentence of the book is not borne out by what the author says in summing up his hero's achievements.

> C.R. Das, according to his biographer, "remained a destroyer and could not become a builder, try as he might." "He failed to apply his own splendid gifts to any work of enduring good or benefit to his country. . . . Towards renaissance and spirituality in India he contributed very little to which subsequent generations of Indians may look for inspiration." He was "in his youth a *bone viveur* and lavish with his money, and unscrupulous in his political methods, who had publicly declared that all means, no matter what, would always justify

> the end. . . ." According to the author his outstanding contribution to the public life of Bengal was the organization of "the most powerful school of political opinion in the country" and lay in the fact that he "left behind him a party which for the first time in the history of India knows its mind and can gather courage enough to follow its convictions."

Had the anothor lived a little longer he would have found reasons to modify his opinion of the strength and vitality of this party. It was held together by hopes which are fast crumbling away and by methods which were not always above board, and the weakness of a structure welded together, not by any constructive vision, but by self-interest and hatred and zeal for destruction, is becoming more and more manifest. If dyarchy has been scotched in Bengal, it has not been killed, and if, moreover, as the author further says, Chitta Ranjan succeeded in tearing to tatters the prestige and authority of the Anglo-Indian government, the ground was thoroughly prepared by the non-co-operation movement, on the crest of which Mr. Das rode to whether success he attained.

Mr. Ray considers Lord Ronaldshay's theory of a cultural reaction among educated Hindus as more imaginary than real. We agree in this view.

> "Young India," says Mr. Roy, "has drunk so deep of the new and heady wine of modern materialism that the metaphysics of quiescence and the philosophy of fatalism can no longer drug or dope her into a life of somnolence or slumber. . The prophets of reaction and revivalism are considered back numbers today among all classes of our people, and their wild denuciations of modernity carry conviction nowhere."

But the career of his hero, who began life as the son of Brahmo parents, and wrote on his return from England poems full of "a passionate delight in beauty, a real joy of life, an insatiatc yearning to love the pleasures and pains of existence, their deepest depths," and through the mazes of an atheistical philosophy passes to "the glorification and idealization of the life of the harlot," and later on came under the influence of Vaishnavism, only to end during the last days of his life, as a spirited disciple of the head of the Satsang Anand at Pabna (p. 221), is not calculated to say

Lord Ronaldshay's pet theory, especially C.R. Das was certainly not the first, we are afraid, will be he the last, educated Indian to betray such "evolutionary" tendencies.

This, however, is not the whole picture and it would be just as wrong to close estimate of C.R. Das on this note and would be to call him the greatest figure of Bengali life. Undoubtedly, he was the dynamic personality in modern Bengal politics, and in his power of organisation vigour, pushfulness, and fearless devotion to his purpose, he far surpassed his colleagues and rivals in the field of politics. He had many loveable qualities in spite of his autocratic temper, to which the author alludes at one place, and could with the hearts of his followers by his open-minded generosity and loyalty. Not only did he sacrifice his wealth but he sacrificed his talents, his health, and his very life-time to the cause which he had made his aim. There can be no doubt that during the last few years of his life he bestrode the political arena of Bengal like a Colossus, and made place in the hearts of his people which was unique and unprecedented. In the beautiful words of Rabindranath :

> "The best gift that Chitta Ranjan has his countrymen is not any particular politics social programme, but the creative force of a aspiration that has taken a deathless form the sacrifice which his life represented."

For the rest, there are many things the book that will amply repay perusal. The author's views on social and economic questions, particularly the latter, will promote thought and sometimes opposition. The author's views on the political situation can be briefly indicated by the following extracts :

> "We have now learnt that most of the failings of our life—political, material, and economic due to the faults of omission and communist of our rulers, that most of the conditions in India we now live are removeable, and it is the foreign bureaucracy that stands between us and our rightful place in the sun."...
>
> "It is on freedom first and freedom last—freedom from foreign rule and yoke—that the young revolutionaries have set their hearts and eyes... For revolutionaries ! What a

pity they do not see that so long as we do not put our own house in order and look facts in the face, realize our own responsibilities for the development of a greater and a more united civic and national consciousness, and practise to a larger extent the virtues of forbearance and self-restraint, short-cuts will be of no use and their heart's desire for freedom will recede further and further, as does a mirage in the desert."

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C.R. DAS AND THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

H.N. PANDIT

An epic story was condensed into an account of two years' duration packed with some of the most incredible events which occurred in the course of India's fight for freedom. In the last week of December 1919 the Indian National Congress was holding its annual session at Amritsar. A few months ago the massacre of the Jallianwalla Bagh had taken place and had been followed by more atrocities committed by the armed forces of the British Raj as a reprisal for Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent satyagraha movement against the oppressive Rowlatt Act. The satyagraha had been withdrawn and its promoters now sat in a more chastened mood, as the British Government viewed it, to consider whether they would accept the Montague-Chelmsford informs embodied in an Act of Parliament which had just been passed. The reform was a poor constitutional advance, and two leaders from Bengal in particular, Barrister C.R. Das and his friend Bipin Chandra Pal, pleaded for its rejection as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing."

The politically-conscious audience at Amritsar knew something about these two men. Pal was more well known as a fiery orator and intellectual at the same time. In the first decade of the century he was known as the chief ideologue and promoter of "The New Spirit in India."[1] The word "Swaraj" was Pal's coining in those days when he organised for the first time in India a passive resistance movement and boycott of British goods,[2]

PROSPEROUS LAWYER

Pal's companion was a comparactively new face at big political congregations, though he looked too strong for a mere fledgeling. Das was better known as India's most prosperous legal practitioner who was living in Calcutta like a king, as Gandhi had then heard about him. Subhas Chandra Bose, one of Das's closest aides in later years, described Chittaranjan Das of those days as earning thousands of rupees in one day and spending thousands away in one hour. But this was not all; and a spectator at the Amritsar Congress could have justly said about Das that there was more to it than met the eye. Indeed the background was known only to a few.

Politics had been, over the years, a besetting passion for C. R. Das, if political activity could be taken to mean also that particular function which he had chosen for himself, namely, financing activities to help India's struggle for freedom, and also providing legal defence to political workers in courts. This was also one of the stands that bond him with his friend and philosopher, Bipin Pal, in a long-enduring friendship. Said Pal many years later :

TWO INTERESTS

"In 1905 with the birth of one new nationalist movement our old intimacy and comradeship grew still more intimate. For nearly twenty years Chittaranjan and myself were really co-partners in the service of our common Motherland. While I worked, he found the means of my subsistence. And he bore my burdens with a deep and abiding sense of sacred duty which made it possible for me freely to accept his help without hesitancy or humiliation."[3]

Bipin Chandra Pal whom Sri Aurobindo once described as "the most powerful brain now at work in Bengal" was considered by many as Chittaranjan's political man. Apart from the practice of politics in Pal's company, Das had two other big interests in life both of which often seemed stronger than his involvement in politics. One was poetry and with it a strong desire to serve Bengali language and literature, and the other a craving for spiritual experience through devotional meditation and practice as an ardent vaishnava.

Mahatma Gandhi who had started the Rowlatt Act satyagraha entirely on his own by disregarding the advice of elders like

Annie Besant and Madan Mohan Malaviya, was now in a very different mood at the Amritsar Congress. He was all for a compromise with the British Government. At his request Das toned down his opposition to the new reform. A compromise resolution was then proposed to show India's readiness to work the new Act, though Das's criticism of it was allowed to remain. One sentence at the thanking the Secretary of State for India. Edwin Montague, for his labours was added particularly to indicate a new friendly approach. For the rake of unity among nationalists Das swallowed his pride of an outraged Indian after the Punjab happenings, and accepted the change. At Gandhi's instance the Congress passed another resolution offering welcome to the Prince of Wales on his proposed visit to India in 1921.[4]

CHANGED HIS MIND

The Amirtsar session ended in the first week of January 1920. Towards the ended of the same month Gandhi changed his attitude towards the British Government so completely that he advised the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat movement "to have recorse to non-cooperation for getting the Khilafat wrong righted."[5] When they sought his cooperation. This movement of Indian Muslims was meant to compel the British Government to restore the Sultan of Turkey (who was the Caliph or the religious head of the Muslim world) to his former influence instead of liquidating his empire as was proposed in a draft peace treaty after the First World War.

JINNAH WAS AGAINST

The leaders of the Khilafat movement sought Gandhi's help in their movement and associated him with all their deliberations. Greatly elated at this, Gandhi advised them again to resort to non-cooperation, and wanted Hindus also to join this movement. In March 1920 Gandhi forbade his followers to demand that the movement should also be for Swaraj along with the Khilafat because that would look like a business deal between Hindus and Muslims on a give and-take basis. Later, however, "it was found that Khilafat was not sufficiently attractive to Hindus; so at a meeting of the AICC held at Banaras on May 30 and 31, 1920, the Punjab atrocities and the deficiencies of the Reform Act were

added to the list of provocative causes."[6]

By this time Gandhi had fully associated the Congress with the Khilafat movement. "At sub-committee of the Congress, formed to consider the question, recommended a boycott of educational institutions and law courts. There was no suggestion about the boycott of legislative councils, but Gandhi insisted on its inclusion in the Congress programme. A special session of the Congress was called at Calcutta on the 4th September 1920 to consider this momentous issue."[7]

At Calcutta all the senior leaders were against the proposal for the non-cooperation programme which included boycott of British goods, British titles, educational institutions, law courts and legislative councils. Annie Besant, Bipin Pal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah opposed a movement on the religious issue of Khilafat. Jinnah also opposed the idea of students giving up their studies and a programme deliberately to break the law. C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru opposed the boycott of Councils on the ground that it would mean voluntarily throwing away a weapon for fighting the Raj which the Indians had secured after heard struggle. Among other leaders of Indian thought Tagore was horrified at the proposal of students giving up their studies. Novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee mounted a blistering attack on the policy of encouraging Pan-Islamism among Indian Muslims and asking Hindus to help them. Bipin Pal alone attacked the proposal on the ground that it implied total repudiation of reason only because a single individual wanted it, and also on the ground that it was "due to inspiration of medieval religious sentiments."[8]

HUGE MAJORITY

At the Congress session in Calcutta Pal and Das worked together, and Das spoke in support of an amendment moved by Pal to Gandhi's resolution. They proposed a thorough preparation for five years in advance for launching the non-cooperation movement and sending meanwhile a delegation to England to place India's demand before the British Cabinet. At heart Das was impatient to join the movement if it was justifiable on other grounds, while Pal wanted restraint. Gandhi countered their argument by saying that Khilafat presented a unique opportunity at that moment which should not be thrown away.

On the question of boycott of the Councils, the oratorical skill of both the Bengal leaders failed to sway the delegates. But it proved to be a close contest according to veteran Congress leader, D.P. Mishra who says :

> "The real battle was fought in the subjects Committee and how tough it was can be judged from the fact that Gandhi won by a majority of seven votes only. In the open session the resolution on non-cooperation, which Gandhi himself moved was passed by 1,886 voting for and 884 against."[9]

THE CALCUTTA DECISION

The decision at Calcutta was tentative and had to be ratified at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December. While Gandhi toured the country to propagate non-cooperation during the interventng period of three months, there was estrangement between Chittaranjan and Bipin Pal, the former having already begun to address meetings in favour of non-cooperation.[10] Gandhi understood the state of Das's mind and also clearly foresaw the impetus which his movement would gain if the great lawyer could be won over to the cause of struggle and sacrifice. At Nagpur, while the general expectation was a clash between the two giants, Gandhi invited Das on the eve of the Congress sescion for a heart-to-heart talk. In a dramatic bid for compromise he dropped from his resolution all mention of the boycott of Councils—a point on which Das would never give in—and the result was that Chittaranjan himself moved the non-cooperation resolution, declaring at the same time that he would give up his legal practice. The effect of the announcement was some thing which no one, except perhaps Gandhi, had imagined. At the mention of Das's resolve acenes of wild excitement were witnessed and the Congress seemed to shake in a paroxysm of joy.

Returning home, Das followed up his decision in a manner that exceeded by far what he had promised to do. He gave up his legal practice forthwith, returned all the briefs to his clients and gave away his law books to his son-in-law. The non-cooperation vow was meant to remain operative for a year during which period Gandhi hoped to win freedom for India. For Das, however, there was no question of return at a later date. In one

stroke he cut himself away for ever from the source of his wealth. He gave away his palatial house in South Calcutta to a charity trust for public welfare. Ideas of literary activity and achievementes were cast away and the devotional gatherings at his house in the evenings stopped. It was renunciation of everything for the purpose of concentrating on one goal—the achievement of India's liberation. People of India called Barrister C.R. Das by a new name; Deshbandhu Chittaranjan whose functioned in the world now remained only to rouse his countrymen to action. He was now constantly on the move for his campaign, facing in the process want and hardship which he had not known before. The comfort, the luxury and even the good nourishment which he had been used to, became things of the past.

The history of the Non-cooperation Movement with its country-with *hartals* the incarceration of the leaders and a thousand other stories of individual suffering, is well, known. For Deshbandhu two events in particular had crushing effects on his spirit. The first came when he was in prison in the month of December 1921. The Prince of Wales had landed on the soil of India to be greeted with a country-wide *hartal.* This non-plussed the British authorities who thought of a compromise with the nationalists before the Prince visited Calcutta during the Christmas holidays to face a similar situation. Viceroy Lord Reading himself took the initiative in approaching Gandhi through all his associates, not the least through Das who was then in prison at Calcutta. The story is best heard in the account of one of the close followers of Mahatma Gandhi, K.M. Munshi has written the following in his *Pilgrimage to Freedom* on this particular event :

FATEFUL DECISION

"Lord Reading, the Viceroy, became so unnerved at the dreary prospect of the heir to the throne parading in full splendour through the empty streets of Indian cities that he decided to pay a heavy price to purchase a friendly gesture from the Indian people.

"Pandit H.N. Kunzru and my friend Jamnadas Dwarkadas were deputed by Lord Reading, as well as Tej Bahadur, Mrs. Besant and Malaviyaji, to meet Gandhiji at Ahmedabad on

December 18, 1921 with the offer that Reading would call a Round Table Conference at Calcutta a week prior to the Prince's visit there, he himself representing the British Government, and India to be represented by her politicians including Gandhiji and other Congress leaders. Reading further offered that at this Conference, he would, on behalf of the British Government, concede full provincial autonomy and discuss the possibilities of dyarchy in the Central Government. All the political prisoners were to be released.

"The same offer was given to C.R. Das who was at that time in the Alipore Central Jail, Calcutta, Das welcomed the offer immediately and telegraphed to Gandhiji to accept it. Gandhiji was at first inclined to accept the offer, but according to Kanji Dwarkadas about half a dozen Maulvis induced him to change his mind.

"The reason for this extraordinary decision was that through Reading had offered amnesty for all political prisoners it would not secure the release of the Ali Brothers; for they had been convicted under certain provisions of the Penal Code, which placed them in a different category from other political prisoners.

"Gandhiji's decision was most unfortunate. According to Subhas Chandra Bose, C.R. Das was besides himself with anger; 'The chance of a life-time has been lost,' he said."[11]

SECOND BLOW

The second blow for Deshbandhu was the abrupt suspension of the movement by Gandhi after the well known incident at Chau-i Chaura. To understand the disappointment of those who had suffered for it, it is necessary to realise what hopes had been roused by the movement. Throughout the year 1921 the country passed through a period of inspiration. Fraternal feelings between Hindus and Muslims were such as had never been witnessed before. Even in those days of conservative social mores among Hindus Muslims were the most welcome guests in many Hindu houses and members of the two communities literally drank from the same cup. Swami Shraddhanand was invited to address Muslims at the great Jama Masjid of Delhi. For those

who had made sacrifices, to have a great experience in life and to witness momentous events, Gandhi gave them their money's worth. India was under the spell of a massive surge of emotion before which no government seemed strong enough to stand for long. The faith in the success of the movement was indeed so widespread that in far-off Germany, as Adolf Hitler later mentioned in his *Mein Kampf*, many then believed that the collapse of the British empire in India was imminent.

LEADERS WERE ANGRY

In December 1921, Deshbandhu was due to preside over the Ahmedabad session of the Congress. Since he was in prison, Hakim Ajmal Khan acted as the President and Deshbandhu's presidential address was read out by Sarojini Naidu. After the session Gandhi gave notice to the Viceroy of a mass civil disobedience with no-tax compaign to be started soon at Bardoli in Gujarat Just then an incident occurred at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district of U.P. where a mob, infuriated by police excesses, surrounded a police station and set fire to it, burning a number of policemen alive. On hearing the report of this incident Gandhi called off the whole movement without consulting any one. All Congress leaders criticised this action though with varying degrees of vehemence. Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal wrote strong letters to Gandhi from prison. K.M. Munshi said he was ashamed to see his leader lose his nerves in the midst of the battle. Lala Lajpat Rai sent a 70-page indictment of Gandhi's arbitrary action. Writing later in cooler environment, Jawaharlal said in his *Autobiography* : "We were angry when we learnt of this stoppage of our struggle at a time when we seemed to be consolidating our position and advancing on all fronts."[12]

About C.R. Das's feelings Subhas Bose has said that the retreat at Bardoli came as a staggering blow to him. Criticising Gandhi openly, he told his associates : "Whatever justification Mahatmaji had in stopping mass civil disobedience at Bardoli, he had none in stopping the work of volunteers in Bengal which had practically paralysed the work of the Government, and this was the second instance when Mahatmaji bungled the

situation."[13]

The Non-cooperation Movement which was to brink independence to India now left nothing for those who had taken part in it except some vivid memories. The period of inspiration had lasted for nearly a year with an euphoria born of its temporary success. After that the unpaid bills began to arrive. Communal riots broke out in many parts of the country. The most serious among these was in Malabar where the Muslim Moplabs rose in revolt and established their regime of terror during which mass massacre of Hindus, forced conversion to Islam and abduction of Hindu women went on for months at a stretch.

BITTER FRUITS

Thus at the end of the movement Swaraj remained as distant as ever and Hindu-Muslim untiy towards which all efforts had been bent lay in ruins. All the sacrifices made by thousands of people had gone down the drain in the bargain. Das had lost everything he had; his wealth was gone; he had cut down the span of his life by taking to an austere life; he had lost all other hopes about what he wanted to make of his life; he had lost his wenty-year-old friendship with Bipin Pal; his own dream of of seeing Swaraj in his life-time was lost; and he had lost his self-respect by taking so much on the unpredictable mood of one individual. There were also other notable examples of sacrifice besides that of Das; but an issue was different from theirs. He had put together on the palms of his hands, so to say, all that he had in life with all his hopes and dreams, and consigned them all to the flames of the sacrificial fire. Yet the promised God did not make his appearance.

AIM DEFLECTED

The tragedy was indeed too deep for tears. Like the rest of his countrymen Das valued the Non-cooperation Movement solely as an instrument for winning freedom for India. But Gandhi had other aims and attitudes in his life which he sought to weave into the pattern of his political actions, and which sometimes had precedence over national liberation in the

Gandhian order of values. Unfortunately, not only did he make this clear to his followers before the battle, but he also tried to swell their number with the help of opportunistic slogans like "Swaraj within a year". Then the difference between Gandhi's inclinations and his followers' expectations came to the surface at crucial moments only after vital decisions of an irreversible nature had been taken. History has incontrovertible evidence to show that the primary concern of the movement was Khilafat or Hindu-Muslim unity. But the whole country, barring a few individuals like Annie Besant, Bipin Pal, M.A. Jinnah and G.S. Khaparde of Maharashtra believed that India's independence was its only aim. Das also believed this to be freedom alone and by whatever means possible—by outright victory in the battle or by compromise; by one sudded stroke or by gradual advance towards the goal. When Gandhi rejected Lord Reading's overtures, Das felt Gandhi had let the country down through lack of competence to utilise the opportunity. But when he stopped the movement altogether, Das considered it a betrayal.

After this, to maintain a facade of unity in nationalist ranks in the struggle against the British, Das refrained from voicing his feelings to the fullest extent, and in the debate of 1923 on Council entry he addressed public meetings all over India declaring only that Gandhi had "bungled" on the question of freedom. Once he revealed the real state of his mind to Durga Das : "How can we get rid of the Mahatma", he exclaimed, "and put the people back on the road to the capture of power, now within our grasp ?[14] The unquestioned faith which he had reposed in the leadership in December 1920 was completely gone.

HIS LAST DAYS

It must be admitted, however, that if Das's earlier decision was vitiated by an error of judgment, it also led him to immortality. But then did Das care about this gift from his destiny in lieu of success ? No; he wanted only that article for which he had paid the price. It is known that his last days were spent in acure mental agony at the failure of the great struggle in which he had staked everything and lost.

In our country historians and biographers of public men are

inhibited by a hundred considerations about how the truths they want to disclose would be liked by others. Because of this there are few sources today from which one can know how this great son of India suffered in his last days from frustrated hopes. Deshbandhu wrote a few letters on this subject to Motilal Nehru and some also to Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar who was a close friend. Sir Nripendra wrote to Dr. Hemendra Nath Das Gupta about one of these letters in particular, adding that he could not expose its contents to public gaze."[15]

J.W. Kaye in the preface to his *History of the Sepoy War* says: "To the historian all men are dead. If a writer of contemporary history is not prepared to treat the living and the dead alike-to speak as freely and truthfully of the former as of the latter, with no more reservation in one case than in the other he has altogether mistaken his vocation, and should look for a subject in pre-historic times."

Since in our country great anxiety is felt on this account for all public men, living or dead, it would be an extremely difficult undertaking for anyone to write a complete biography of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Little wonder that fifty years have passed since his death without any such thing materialising.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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4. D.P. Mishra : *Living An Era,* p. 19.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
6. Annie Besant : *The Future of Indian Politics,* p. 250.
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8. Pal's letter to Motilal Nehru, quoted in *Social and Political Ideas of Bipin Chandra Pal* by A.P. Mookerjee, p. 110.
9. *Living An Era,* p. 28.
10. See report of Press Conference on 30 November 1920, quoted in *Deshbandhu* by Das Gupta, p. 48.
11. K.M. Munshi, *Pilorimage to Freedom,* p. 23.
12. 1962 edition, p. 81.
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CHITTA RANJAN DAS : A SKETCH

V. NARAYANAN

EARLY LIFE

Chitta Ranjan was born at Calcutta on 5th November 1870. He was the second child of his parents. He was educated first in the London Missionary College, Bhowanipore, whence he matriculated in 1886, and subsequently in the Presidency College, Calcutta, whence he took his B.A. degree in 1890. At College, he gave promise of exceptional literary and oratical gifts which he has so gloriously fulfilled in later life. After taking his degree he went to England originally with the idea of competing for the I.C.S. But events happend which saved his being drafted into "the heaven-born service." He took an active part in the electioneering campaign of Dadhabhai Naoroji and his speeches attracted attention both in England and in India Later on, when Mr. John Maclean, M.P., in the course of a lecture, made certain extremely offensive remarks against the Hindus and the Mussulmans' Chitta Ranjan organised a meeting of the Indians in England to protest against Mr. Maclean's conduct and made a powerful speech, as a result of which Mr. Maclean was forces to appologies and resign his seat in Parliament. Soon after, he was called upon to mark a speech on Indian affairs under the presidenly of Mr. Gladstone which appears to have cost him his place in the civil service; for "though he came out successful in the open competitive examination, his name was chucked off from the list of probationers",

Ultimately he joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in the early nineties.

AT THE BAR

On his return to Calcutta in 1893 he joined the High Court Bar ; his practice underwent the inevitable tardiness of recognition which merit unaided by circumstance obtains in this world; and he was seriously handicapped in his professional life by the insolvency of his father and by his voluntarily sharing with him the responsibility for those debts. But real merit cannot remain unrecognised for long. The celebrated conspiracy case against Mr. Arabinda Ghose and other in 1908 in which he appeared as counsel for the defence pushed Chitta Ranjan into the fore-front of the Calcutta Bar. The fee that he received in that case was entirely inadequate for the labour that it involved. The trial lasted nearly six months. He had to incur a large debt to maintain his family during that long period. But such genuine sacrifice never goes fruitless or unnoticed. It paved the way for his fame and for a lucrative practice at the Bar. More than that, it produced two excellent results. It proved to the world the grertness and the purity of Arabinda Ghose and it brought about a life-long friendship between him and Chitta Ranjan.

Since the release of Arabinda, he was engaged in many notable cases and his daily fees exceeded a thousand rupees. He appeared for the Dumraon Raj in the protracted litigation relating to that estate; he appeared from Mr. Vaidya, then Secretary of the Home Rule League at Nagpur, and got him acquitted on appeal. He successfully defended Dr. Mehta in Burma when he was prosecuted under the Defence of India Act. He was engaged by the Kutubdia internees at Chittagong. Just before quitting the profession in answer to the call of Non-Co-operotion, he was engaged by the Government of India to appear in the Munitions Board case.

HIS GENEROSITY

Chitta Ranjan, like his father, is a man of generous impluses. Although he has earned enormously as an advocate he has put by very little for the future. The poor student who goes to him for monentary help can always be sure of a liberal donation from

him. Latterly he has thrown all his savings into the national cause. He might easily have made a fortune to leave it for his only son but with a true philosopher's frame of mind he does not care for the morrow; and he cannot restrain himself from giving while he has the wherewithal to give.

HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS

In religious views, Chitta Ranjan is a Vaishnavite of the Chaitanya school. His father Babu Bhupan had, like most other English-educated Bengalees of his day, joined the Brahmo Samaj movement and worked heart and soul for the propagation of that cause. Chitta Ranjan too retains some of his father's views about religion and reveres the name of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy. Only according to him, the life-work of his great man "has got to be re-estimated, revalued, re-understood and re-interpreted."

But Chitta Ranjan was against the Europeanization of our cultural system. He believed more in natural growth than in transplantation. He believed in each nation growing by itself (of course not without being influenced by the growth of other nations around it) preserving its own distinct individuality in harmony with the rest of the world.

> With me nationality is no mere political conception borrowed from the philosphy of the West. With me, a nation has to grow because a nation must grow. God's universe teems with varieties of life. Every nation is one unit of such life. Every nation must grow to the evolution of life. The nation to which I belong must also grow, only we must help in its growth. I value this principle of nationality as I value the principle of neutrality and religion. The service of country and nationality is service of humanity. Service of humanity is worship of God.

* * *

AS AN AUTHOR

"Chitta Ranjan's entry into Bengalee literature dates from 1894 or 1895 when he published a volume of Bengali lyrics called *Malancha* which introduced a new element of freedom and realism into modern lyrical literature" in Bengal. But he curbed his literary tastes, and devoted himself wholly to the lawyer's life in order to remove the stain on his father's fair name. And when

recognised till then that immediate steps must be taken along the path which will lead India towards the goal that the British nation has fixed for it long ago. Therefore, when the memorable announcement of August 20th was made, all India was set a thinking about constructive reforms to achieve the aim of the British rule in India. New organizations burst into existence all over India; and the several peoples of India began to think independently about the matter. The Congress camp already been split into two by the Morley-Minto Reforms. But their differences were merely about the details of actual work and in questions of policy and expediency, for both the Extremists and Moderates, were of one voice in this: that India was fit for Responsible Government though progressive steps or successive stages were necessary to work out the idea. So far, they were all Nationalists. Further, both the Moderates and the Extremists were alike believers in the British connection and in the necessity for the establishment of a responsible government in India. Only the Extremists were entirely against the acceptance of—piecemeal legislation in the matter. Chitta Ranjan Das belonged to this latter school of politics and therefore his constructive views about Responsible Government were not much in evidence. And when the Morley-Minto Reforms were accepted by the Moderates and were being worked out in the country, Chitta Ranjan felt no need to come forward to take interest in politics and devoted himself to the movement for the promotion of the vernaculars and the education of the masses into a knowledge of their present position in India. He was not a believer in mere agitation and, therefore, did not take an active part in the moving of the pious resolution in the annual session of the Congress. The announcement of the Secretary of State, however, furnished an acid test. The real strength of the several Congressmen was laid bare to the public. The babblers in politics had to stand aside and make room for workers. A scheme signed by nineteen leading political thinkers was drafted and issued as the irreducible minimum of reforms which would be acceptable in India. Meetings were held everywhere and other schemes discussed. In the wilderness of schemes there was a likelihood of the main objects of the people being obscured. So Mr. Das felt himself impelled to come forward and emphasise the fundamentals. Mr. Montague was coming to India to study the question. * * * When he was thus confronted by the representatives of the

differennt races and creeds, each urging a scheme wherein its own aggrandisement was particularly prominent, what could he do but to succumb to the belief that in immediate grant of full responsible government lurked an unknown danger? And Dyarchy was the result. * * *

The message of hope which His Majesty the King-Emperor left behind him when he returned to England after the Durbar at Delhi rekindled again the faith in the British administration. So When that policy was re-stated in clearer and more definite terms by the Home Government and in a more authoritative manner (not merely as pious expressions of hope like the Royal Proclamations), a movement was started for uniting all the parties and demanding with one voice what the people, as the direct result of the World War, had begun to feel was their birth-right—full responsible government with an adequate protection of the minorities. The promise of the Secretary of State was reiterated in the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy :

> I propounded two questions to my Council : (1) What is the goal of British Rule in India ? (2) What are the steps on the road to that goal ? We came to the conclusion which I trust most Hon. Members will agree was inevitable that the endowment of British India as an integral part of the British Empire with Self-Government was the goal of the British Rule.

And His Excellency pointed out three roads : (1) in the domain of local Self-government village, rural, town or municipal, (2) in the domain of more responsible employment of Indians under the Government (3) in the domain of Legislative Councils wherein "an advance must be made simultaneously with the advances in the other two."

RELEASE OF THE INTERNEES

All this prognosticated a change in the "angle of vision." If so, the machinery by which India was governed might also suffer a beneficial change and there need be no insistence of an entire change of such machinery. Was there such a change of view-point ? Was the question. "No," said C.R. Das on 7th October 1917, when addressing a mass meeting to protest against

the internments :

> Gentlemen, at a time when the British Government in its wisdom has declared its policy that Home Rule in some shape or other must be granted to this country, that some sort of Responsible Government is necessary for the foundation and preservation of the Empire, at a time when His Excellency the Viceroy has advised us to preserve an atmosphere of calmness, I ask, is it wise to detain these men against popular opinion, against the universal desire of the Indian people ? And why should they be detained ? May we not tell those who are responsible. . . . You detained them under an Act which has been characterised by the highest authorities in England and in this country as illegal and *ultra vires.* You have detained these men and other persons on political consideration which are outside the purview of the Defence of India Act under which you claim to detain them.

Again in protesting against the internments under the Defence of India Act in the Town Hall meeting at Calcutta on 5th March 1918, he emphasises, once more, that there has been no change of front, that the Government has not made "any attempt of any kind whatsoever to discover the real cause of the revolutinary party movement" and points out :

> "I know more about these peoples than anybody else in this Hall. I have defended so many of the cases and I know the psychology of their mind. I know the cause of the revolutionary movement is nothing but hunger for freedom. . . . Our educated young men see that nations all over the world are free. The compare their position with tbe position of other nations and they say to themselves 'why should we remain so ?' We also want liberty. . . . These young men burning with the enthusiasm of youth feel that they have not been given any opportunity of taking their legitimate part in the Government of their country in shaping the course of their national development. Give them that right today, you will hear no more of the revolutionary movement. Give them that right today, Tell the people of this country, 'Here it is; we mean to change the system of Government, the Government will be yours, Government of the people and by

the people; work for the good of your country. Build up your nationality, shape the course of your history"; and I guarantee that from the next day the revolutionary party will cease to exist."

In response to the Premier's appeal for more recruitment to the army, Mr. Das spoke again urging the release of the interned ;

"Release them, make them feel that after all it is their country, that there is a Government which feels for them— Do you think that a country where the people have been fighting for political rights for so many years and where every time their petitions and prayers have been rejected with scorn, do you think that in such a country you will get a very large army to come forward unless you can create among them an enthusiasm, unless you can make them feel that they are fighting their own battle ?. . . . Release them, what army do you want which Bengal cannot furnish ? I take upon myself to give up my profession for six months and go over the whole of this country asking the people to join the army in thousands."

But the Government did not answer.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

The political speeches of Mr. C.R. Das delivered in 1917, all emphasise the ideal that India must place before herself. He pointed out the futility of discussing the details of a scheme unless it clearly laid down "some sort of Government in which the Government officials would be responsible to the people whom they govern." The details might, according to him, be safely left to be worked out by the electorate in each province so that each province might mould its own destiny in her own peculiar way.

Mr. C.K. Das was a staunch believer in the immediate fitness of India for Swaraj. The oft-repeated reasons for the postponement of reforms or a gradual regulated dosage of them carried to him no conviction with it. That he was right in his estimate of the people, that illiteracy would not stand in the way of a

proper exercise of the right of franchise, the elections under the Reforms Act have amply demonstrated. Everywhere in spite of their illiteracy the people have shown themselves keenly aware of their rights and chose with intelligence their representatives for the councils. Their shrewdness had outstepped even the anticipations of some of the popular leaders. The quickness with which they imbibed and assimilated the new idea was simply astonishing to those who thought that because the people could not read or write, they could not choose their men. Even among the voters who did not come to poll, there were a great many who abstained, not because they took no intesest in the politics of their land but because they realised the inability of their representatives for doing anything substantial in the new Council as at present constituted. If the artificial division of the Nationalists into Extremists who abstained from, and into Moderates who were bent on working. the reforms complacently had not happened and if the Congress which took to the view that the Reforms were unsatisfactory and disappointing had not kept some of the best men out of the present councils, the Reforms Act, hedged around with difficulties as it is, would have proved in actual working that the people of India, the vast electorate of India were fit to administer an Empire, not merely the portfolios that are now assigned to them.

In a Speech at Dacca he outlined the political future of India as a member of the British Commonwealth "we must not forget the need of an Imperial Federated Government to which all the Governments of the Empire should belong—a Government to which the English Government should belong as one unit, the Indian Government as another, the Governments of Africa, Australia and Canada should belong as other units", and he wants us to realise what a grand opportunity there is within the British Empire of fulfilling that yet still grander ideal of the human race. "If the federation of the human race is not always to remain the poet's dream, if it is ever to be fulfilled, I feel sure that fulfilment will come through the federation of this vast Empire to which we have the honour to belong."

Speaking in the Congress at Calcutta in 1917, he again emphasises this attitude :

I want the power to build my own constitution. I want the

power to build my own constitution in a way which is suited to this country and which afterwards will be referred to as the Great Indian Constitution. We are all agreed as to the great ideal. Let us gather strength to fight for it—let us fight for it with all our might and let us not rest content till the whole thing is granted to us.

It may be said that the British Parliament will never grant you that, but are we considering that at present ? When they make a definite pronouncement as to what they are willing to give us it will be time then to meet again and formulate a definite scheme as to the way in which that ideal might be given effect to. But the time has not come to discuss about it, because I am afraid that in the discussion of it, the main ideal might get lost and I am not anxious to keep up that ideal before you.

AS A NON-CO-OPERATOR

Mr. Montagu returned to England. He comforted himself with the idea that he had got several leaders of the country to accept his compromise. While in India he had realised how the Reforms delay in the grant of reforms would be dangerous. He pursued Bill forward and the Act was passed before the Congress met at Amritsar. And though the Congress expressed itself strongly against the inadequacy of the reforms, most of the leaders including Mr. Gandhi were in favour of co-operation with the Government in the working of the reforms. But Mr. C.R. Das was not the man who falls from the ideal he has set before himself. He opposed co-opeation with the Reforms. And in all probability he would have kept back from politics, nursing in solitude his own ideal of Self-government and trying by all lawful and peaceful means in his power to prepare the country for a complete scheme of Self-government. But that was not to be; another event happened which determined the next stage in his political career. That event was the rise of Non-Co-operation Movement. He himself explains the position in these words :

I have often been asked what is the meaning of this movement ? To my mind the meaning is clear. We want freedom; we want to realise the right of regulating our own lives; we

want to realise the right of building up the great Indian Nation. We want to compel the bureaucracy to recognise that right.

It is unnecessary to refer to the past. It is not my desire to perpetuate bitterness. It is my desire to strengthen our determination to achieve our freedom.

I advocate the method of Non-Co-operation as every other method has failed. I want you to cling to this method, come what may. This is our last chance and this at least shall not be in vain.

Do you understand what Non-Co-operation means ? You must withdraw your help in moving the powerful machinery of the bureaucracy. Do you realise how you can move this machinery ? The bureaucracy works its wicked will through the pleaders, through doctors, through clerks, through their police officers, and through magistrates and judges.

The method that I advocate is the method of sacrifice.

The very simplicity of our life has become difficult of comprehension because of the tortuous and complex organisation which European culture and education have placed before us. Once you turn your face a way from that, you will have faith in methods which belong to us, in standards which are really part of our blood and of our bones. What is more simple than the desire and the determination to withdraw your help from that which is false and unrighteous ? And yet why do you experience such difficulties informing that desire and in fixing that determination."

In his lecture delivered in Patna in February 1921, he traces the history of this new movement, of this new idea :

Think what happened in the Punjab and I cannot forget the Khilafat either. These instances you can forget. You remember there was a non-official committee appointed by the Congress. Last year we all met at Benares and we signed the joint report as non-official commissioners. The report was drafted by Mahatma Gandhi. We examined that report and discussed the matter. We purposely put our demands very low. . . . We had made up our minds that we would put forward our demand and it ought to be no more a pious

resolution and we must insist upon the Government to act up to our recommendation. Our legitimate demands were so low. Even these demands were treated with scorn and the offenders were left scot free. Subscriptions were raised for these villains. Ladies danced, I am informed, to collect money for the upkeep of those villainous offenders. We entered into a contract there in the holy city of Benares. It is for this blunder that Mahatma Gandhi has started Non-Co-operation."

His subsequent conduct cannot be but better than in his own Words :

Mahatma Gandhi started it, and after that my friend Mr. Motilal Nehru joined it. In the Calcutta Congress I did not join it because there was a great difference of opinion. Few read my speech because I was against Non-Co-operation at Calcutta. Is it not a fact that I opposed that resolution on the very ground of Non-Co-operation. Once I have made up my mind to accept it. I must follow it. Afterwards I made up my mind that this Non-Co-operation must be more complete from the national point of view. I wanted to bring a more effective resolution. So far as my practice is concerned, I have not accepted a single new case after the Calcutta Congress; I drafted another resolution, I specially went to Benares and there discussed the resolution with Mahatma Gandhi, with my friend, Madan Mohan Malaviya, with my friend Lala Lajpat Rai. I met again Mahatma Gandhi at Dacca and discussed with him again and he agreed to it. Those who knew of the inner working of the Nagpur Congress might have known how I worked day and night for that resolution and I tell you I succeeded.

"MY QUARREL IS WITH THE SYSTEM"

As early as in 1917 he was clearly determined upon getting rid of the bureaucracy, as he calls it :

"My quarrel is not with the individual at all. My quarrel is with the system. It is the system which is responsible for the bad Government of this country. Why is the system

bad ? It is for this—that there is no responsibility. To whom is the Government of India responsible ? Not to the people. They have got to take their orders from the British Parliament. Has the British Parliament got any time to devote to India or to make that responsibility real ? No, they have neglected India not out of apathy but their own interest required it—they have to disscuss so many questions which are of far greater importance to England than the question of India."

And Mr. Das was convinced that the new Reforms did not materially after the situation.

"I care not whether you have Paliamentary councils or Legislative councils divided into so many compartments, whether you have an upper house and lower houses in order to govern the country. I want India to say in one voice that we will govern ourselves. That is the right we have. No Government can deprive us of that right. The moment you discover that, you will get Swaraj."

"What happened in the Punjab, what happened to our Mohamedan brethren and the passings of many oppressive laws from time to time" were to him further indications and more positive proofs that the bureaucracy had not changed its angle of vision, that nothing short of Swaraj was good for India. Mr. Das would have been a Non-Co-operator even if these events have not happened (as his attitude at the Amritsar Congress indicated) but he would have stood alone and there would have been no mass movement behind him.

HIS GREAT SACRIFICE

The progress of Chitta Ranjan in the Non-Co-operation movement is too well-known to need a detailed discussion. He was chiefly instrumental in drawing the students away from the Calcutta colleges and the schools in Bengal as might be inferred from the lament of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee. He was largely instrumental in collecting the large sum that was collected in Bengal for the Tilak Swarajya Fund. He has completely given up a lucrative practice and a leading position at the Bar. He has given

away all his earnings in support of the National College at Calcutta where the students that came out of the other colleges were taught the use of the Charka as a step in the attainment of Swaraj. And because of all this work that he did so whole-heartedly and so thoroughly, he was unanimously elected by the Congress organisations which had since the Nagpur Congress become Non-Co-operation organisation—to be the President for the Session of 1921. For Mr. Das is a man with a Personality, a man with an ideal, a man who has heard the roar of the sea and cannot contain himself.

> It does not matter what happens to me – it does not matter what happens to the present generation, it does not matter what happens to the educated community of today, but what matters with me is the development of the nation. I look forward to the time when the nation will rise and stand in all its glory. I do not care whether I am alive or dead at that moment, whether my children will be living then or not—but the time will come when by God's grace we as a nation will make ourselves felt and will stand in all our strength and face the world. That is the ideal which appeals to me every moment of my life. I feel within myself that that is my appointed task. I shall devote all that I hold dear to the service of that cause; and, if I die in the attempt, what then ? Fail we alone ? If I die in this work I believe I shall be born in this country again and again, live for it, hope for it, work for it with all the energy of my life, with all the love of my nature till I see the fulfilment of my hope and the realisation of this ideal.

And whether or not we agree with Mr. Das in all that he does, this is clear that he is a great unselfish man actuated by high ideals and fully deserving of all our admiration and regard.

MESSAGE BEFORE ARREST

Since the election of Mr. Das as the President of the Congress, events marched in rapid strides. Early in December, Lord Ronaldshay defined the attitude of his Government towards the progress of Non-Co-operation to which Mr. Das replied on December 2nd by sending a message to the Congress workers, of

which the following is an extract :

"My first word and my last word to you is never to for-sake the ideal of non-violent Non-Co-operation. I know it is a difficult creed to follow. I know that sometimes the provocation is so great that it is extremely difficult to remain non-violent in thought, world and deed. . . Let us not forget that we, the Non-Co-operators, claim to hold the country. Let us realise that to the extent to which we do not succeed in so controlling the masses, be they hooligans or not, to that extent Non-Co-operation, has failed. The responsibilities are ours. . . If we fail to exercise control over the masses, how can we claim to have success ?". . .

And this from his message to the people of Bengal :

"Our duty is clear. The Indian National Congress has declared that Swaraj is our only goal and that Non-Co-operation is the only method by which to reach that goal. . . The people of Bengal are now on their trial. . . I ask my countrymen to be patient. I appeal to them to undergo all sufferings cheerfully. I call upon them not to forsake the sacred work which the Indian National Congress has enjoined. The Congress work is done and can only be done by volunteers. . . I offer myself as a volunteer in the service of the Congress. I trust that within a few days there will be a million volunteers for the work of the Province. Our cause is sacred. Our method is peaceful and non-violent. Do you not realise that the service of our country is the service of God ?

ARRESTS AND CONVICTION

Soon after the volunteer movement was declared illegal in Bengal and Chiraranjan Das, the only son of Mr. Das, was arrested on the afternoon of the 6th and sentenced to six months imprisonment on the 9th. Mrs. C.R. Das, and Urmila Devi, the sister of Mr. C.R. Das, were also arrested on the evening of the 6th for obstructing the highway on the allegation that under cover of selling Khaddar they were trying to effect a *hartal*, Though ultimately they were let off with a warning by the Magistrate, other sensational arrests were made throughout the

country. We were told that on the 9th instant Mr. C.R. Das interviewed Lord Ronaldshay and that nothing was known about the result; and on the 11th came the news that Mr. C.R. Das himself had been arrested on a charge under Section 17B of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. The hearing of his case was adjourned from time to time and Mr. Das was an undertrial prisoner when the Congress met at Ahmedabad.

And none has put the position of the true Non-Co-operator in clearer and fewer words than he in the message which he delivered on the eve of his arrest on December 10th and the student of the life of Mr. C.R. Das cannot refrain from adding the latest messages that he has issued to the people and to the Congress workers to indicate the line in which life is developing.

> This is my last message to you, men and women of India. Victory is in sight, if you are prepared to win it by suffering; it is in such agony as that through which we are passing that nations are born; but you must bear this agony with fortitude with courage and with perfect slef-composure. Remember that so long as you follow the path of Non-violence, you put the bureaucracy in the wrong; but move by a hair's breadth from the path which Mahatma Gandhi has mapped out for you, and you give away the battle to the bureaucracy. Swaraj is our goal, Swaraj not in compartments, not by instalments, but Swaraj whole and entire. Now it is for you, men and women, to say whether we shall attain the goal for which we are striving. * * *

CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. Das is only just over fifty years old now and in the full prime of life. As years pass by, newer aspects of his greatness might develop with the march of events and the full influence and true bearing of his life is impossible of final assessment at present: we must rest content for the present with an appreciation of the views he has so clearly exponded in his undelivered Presidential Address to the Ahmedabad Congress of December 1921, as indicating the scope and future development of his career and according the following extracts therefrom are made :

"We have arrived at a critical stage in our struggle with the

bureaucracy. . . . I come from the struggle which has just begun in Calcutta, chastened and purified, and if I have no worldly wisdom to give, I at least bring before you unbounded enthusiasm and a resolute determination to see this struggle through. . . . And what is Non-Co-operation : 'It is the refusal to be a party to preventable evil; it is the refusal to accept or have any part in injustice; it is the refusal to acquiesce in wrongs that can be righted, or to submit to a state of affairs which is manifestly inconsistent with the dictates of righteousness. And as a consequence, it is the refusal to work with those who on grounds of interest or expediency, insist upon committing or perpetrating wrong' (Stocks). . . . We break in order to build : We destory in order to construct : We reject in order to accept. This is the whole history of human endeavour. . . . It requires no wisdom to see that, if every one of us withdraws our helping hand from the machine that is relentlessly working to prevent our growth and self-realisation as a nation, the machine must of necessity cease to work. This, then, is the philosophy on which the Non-Co-operation movement is based : to defy with absolute constancy the hostile powers that would hamper in any way our growth and self-fulfilment as a nation, to keep its evil always in view, not hating the power but recognising its evil as an evil and refusing no suffering that the malice of that power can invent. . . ."

The Address ended with a justification of the boycott of the Prince's visit clearly expressing the Non-Co-operator's point of view.

On your behalf. I would respectfully lay before His Royal Highness our wishes of goodwill to him personally. There is no quarrel between us and the Royal House of England; but he comes here as the ambassador of a power with whom we have decided not to co-operate; as such we cannot receive him. Also, we are in no mood to take part in any rejoicing. We are fighting for our national existence, for the recognition of our elementary right, freely to live our own life and evolve our own destiny according to our lights. It would be sheer

hypocrisy on our part to extend a national welcome to the Ambassador of the Power that would deny us our elementary right.

On the 14th February Mr. Das was sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment.

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ON THE DEATH OF MR. C.R. DAS

JADUNATH SARKAR

The great newspaper magnate Lord Northcliffe, when visitng Singapore, wrote :

> "Here the climate is so damp and enervating that newly opened Huntley and Palmer's biscuits feel like putty and the air around is one vast vapour bath. And yet here Englishmen and Englishwomen are driving, riding, playing golf and dancing as vigorously as at Home. What splendid vitality has our race."

And *our* race ? Mr. C.R. Das died at the age of 54 after less than 36 hours of a simple fever. Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. Gokhale, and Mr. M. Bhattacharya (once Accountant-General of the Punjab) all passed away prematurely (judging by English standards of longevity) and nearly all so quickly that the best medical treatment could not be given to them, and their real disease could not be satisfactorily ascertained. They were all well-to-do and highly educated men, free from vice; none of them died of an accedent. They had no vital power of resistance, no reserve of strength,—and, in the case Sir Ashutosh and Mr. C.R. Das at least, not even the habit and spirit of insisting on careful scientific treatment from the first onset of the disease. Are such tragedies possible in any country of Europe,—except Soviet Russia ? And these were our leaders, men pre-eminently at the top of different branches of our national life. The inference of national inefficiency from such events is obvious and needs no labouring.

A still greater proof of our national weakness (compared with our European and Japanese competitors in the broad world of action) is the true character of Mr. C.R. Das's influence over the country—(which was as practically of the same type as Sir Ashutosh Mukherji's). It was purely personal magnetism and one-man,—rule not, as in Europe, the appeal to clear impersonal principles, the organisation of a party united by allegiance to one ideal, the deliberate rearing up of worthy lieutenants trained in responsibility and trusted with command in subordinate positions, so as to be able to take the leader's place at his death. No; we are still Orientals, in academic matters as well as in politics even of the least European type: we worship *gurus*, we love to surrender our moral judgment and human will to the one-man ruler, we look to him and him alone for guidance and order at every step; the organs of our body politic (like the body academic in College Square, Calcutta) have been taught to function only at the bidding of the sole autocrat at the head,—in fact they are not organs possessed of life and nerves, but dead machines set going by a master-machanic." And this assemblage of "spare parts', hopes to combat the free living national organisations of Europe !

Nothing can be done, no opinion expressed even on the smallest matter, unless we run for light and order to Sabarmati or disturb Mr. Das's sorely needed rest-cure at Patna and Darjiling. *He* must personally canvas every voter at Bhawanipur or they would not vote for the Swaraj party's chosen candidate.

Mr. Das must run back half-dead from Patna and personally lobby every M.L.C. or they would not throw out the ministers' salaries in Bengal. These are the clearest examples that the guiding motive among us is "men not measures," personal influence and not moral principle. Did Gladstone or Gambetta feel it necessary to resort to personal canvassing (as distinct from platform speeches) for any follower ? If not, then there is still at least one difference between Europe and India.

What happens where the guiding force is personality, not principles ? The formidable-looking party is dissolved by the death of the one superman leader, or personal rivalry among the many leaders (where there is no outstanding commander-in-chief) prevents the formation of party ministry (based on community of principles), as has happened at Nagpur. Such parties are purely

patched-up groups, and make the nation politically not a whit stronger than we were in the Mughal times.

A thoughtful critic asked the Irish Nationalists, "Why do you make a necrology of your country's history and even current politics?" Like the Irish, we too, are solely united by the emotional worship of dead leaders, we love to dote on our dead political "martyrs"—and do not care to train our party through action and by directing our attention and energy to living men and living issues.

The history of Bengal during the next few months will furnish the answer to the question whether we have utilised the century and a half of British peace. British administrative example, English education, and the preaching and sacrifice of a succession of national leaders, and acquired the one indispensable basis of popular government, or whether we still retain the spirit of the *Kartabhaja* and *Maharaja* sects. Have we learnt that the nation is greater than the individual ? Have we acquired the spirit of ancient Sparta which refused to mourn even for the death of a consummate soldier-statesman like Brasidas, saving "Sparta bath many a worthier son than he,"—the spirit of republican Rome which refused to be crushed by the crushing defeat at Cannae ? Or, are we still the Orientals whose victorious army dispersed in terror and confusion as soon as its supreme general was shot dead ?

The shouting and the tumult dies.
The Lokmanyas and the Deshbandhus depart,
Still stands thine ancient sarifice—

The future conduct of our, countrymen will show whether Mr. C.R. Das's life, with its great sacrifice, has been lived in vain.

Darjiling,
June 17, 1925.

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CHITTARANJAN DAS

ARISTIDES

Chittaranjan Das is now a dim memory. The modern Indian —in the sense he belongs to the current age—has no concept of the Indian renaissance of the 19th century in field spiritual, cultural and political. Many of the contributions to it come from Bengal. Yes, its elite were the most anglicised in India possibly because Calcutta was the seat and the symbol of the British Empire in India. Was not the first intellectually-anchored agitation in slave India which started in 1905 ostensibly over the partition of Bengal basically political or basically Bengali ? There was no doubt, it was also mainly political as the concept of the partition of Bengal was equally politically motivated. To attribute the partition to the impulsive, impetuous and all-knowing Curzon will be doing damage to the basic plank of the rule of the British Empire in India, *divide et impera*—and before leaving India the British finally divided it !

It was strange that even with the super-imposition of a veneer of British culture and arts, Bengal developed as a national symbol for the rest of India. It was equally strange that the new India elite of Bengal neglected the economic aspects of India's development leaving it to the White Boxwallah and his Marwari middleman.

In his introduction to Rabindranath Tagore's centenary volume, Jawaharlal Nehru quoted Rabinderanath Tagore's view of one of Bengal's earlist intellctuals as expressed to Romain Rolland. "It is curious to note how India has finished probably the first internationally-minded man, I mean Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He had a

passion for truth. He realised that bond of spiritual unity which links the whole of mankind and that it is the purpose of religion to reach down to that fundamental unity of human relationship, of human efforts and achievements."

OTHER GREAT MEN

Besides Raja Ram Mohan Roy, other names from Bengal which have exercised great spiritual influence over the whole of India spring to one's mind. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Sri Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo are names which will live as long as India lives. The two leading scientists of India before C.V. Raman were J.C. Bose and Acharya P.C. Ray. Great writers and poets, all writing without losing sight of the basic objective of the freedom of India, (one of whom gave us Vandemataram as the Gurudev gave us what is now our national anthem at the request of Jawaharlal Nehru long before freedom come) and a substantial number of leading educationists, Indologists and artists of India came from this area. That was and is Bengal and out of it came Chittaranjan Das, almost one of the last amongst the giants. While contemplating the life and history of C.R. Das at the time of the centuary year of his birth, one feels sad reading a report of the Centenary Celebration in Delhi which I reproduce here.

> New Delhi, Nov. 5—Most Delhi people knew that Government offices were closed today but did not know why. Many of those who knew that it was the birth centenary of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das did not know who he was.
> "I do not know why the Government has started observing the birth centenaries of industralists," said a Government clerk. He thought C.R. Das was the founder of the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works.
> A Connaught Place shop-keeper said C.R. Das was a former Chief Justice of India. A university student said he was a nationalist leader, but could not elaborate further.
> In tune with such ignorance, only one function was held in the Capital, and that was organised by the West Bengal Government Information Bureau at Banga Bhavan.
>
> —*Hindustan Times*

SRI AUROBINDO'S TRIAL

Biographies of C.R. Das indicate a life of cycles of prosperity and adversity. Born in a well-to-do family, he was able to go to England to compete for the Indian Civil Service examination—the then prevailing ambition of young men that had confidence in themselves and adequate resources. His extra-curricular political activities made him, fail in the examination as was borne out by a communication from a British friend of the family. The alternative was law in which he qualified and returned home to experience physical and mental anguish because of the family getting pauperised. The task of getting out of this slough consumed years of hard life and hard work when success came to his grasp. As the case with many lawyers in the upper income bracket. C.R. Das's association with the Indian National Congress that was started in 1885 became a matter of course. Bengal's contribution to the presidential chair of the Congress over a period of decades was significant in numbers and quality. It has to be underlined heavily that C.R. Das as advocate for Sri Aurobindo, when he and others were charged with murder, not only got Sri Aurobindo acquitted but in the process of pleading for him imbibed, perhaps unconsciously, the ideas and principles that Sri Aurobindo stood for.

PROMINENT LEADER

Bepin Chandra Pal records that C. R. Das was behind, 'his' *New India* of 1901, a newspaper started by him. But it was from 1905, after the partition of Bengal that C.R. Das was actively drawn into the whirlpool of Indian politics and the Swadeshi Movement and was identified with the Bal Gangadhar Tilak when he gave the war cry "Swaraj is my birthright" in Calcutta in June 1906. For nearly ten years from the days of the Surat Congress, Das remained aloof from active politics. His re-emergence into the political arena was in April 1916 when be presided over the Bengal Political Conference. From then to the Calcutta Congress of December 1917, when Mrs. Besant, fresh from her internment presided, was the period when Chittaranjan Das became a prominent Congress leader and the authentic voice of Bengal. A person trained to think, sift fact and argue, Chittaranjan Das had

—one could detect at this distance of time—in his mind certain degree of conflict from 1917 almost till his end. In the special session of the Congress at Bombay in August 1918 he supported the taking up of a strong position against the Government of India's draft resolution about Reforms in opposition to that of veteran Surendranath Banerji, though he had some migivings about parting with the moderate elements in the Congress unceremoniously.

AVOIDED SPLIT

In the December session of that year, however, his stand was unequivocally against the British proposal. The next year's session of the Congress at Amritsar after the Jallianwallah Bhag slaughter, C.R. Das's views were again put to the test, this time against the somewhat moderate stand taken by Gandhiji. It appears he yielded to avoid a split. It perhaps needed the explanation that C.R. Das gave to clarify his position when later he was against the boycott of the Councils without in any measure watering down the deemed for self-determination, though the Congress did not accept the position at its Nagpur session. In December 1920 Gandhiji who had, since Amritsar, moved over to the idea of non-cooperation with the British and to the support of the Khilafat agitation was for the immediate starting of the non-cooperation movement while Das was a period of five years' preparation for the struggle while reiterating his opposition to the boycott of the Councils. History records that Das, in spite of the support vouchsafed for him by a large contingent of delegates from Bengal yielded having obtained the deletion from the main resolution of the Congress of a specific mention of boycott of the Councils.

From then till the time when he took a leading part with Pandit Motilal Nehru on the organisation of the Swarajya party with the blessings of the parent body, C.R. Das fully immersed in the movement. It is worth mentioning that this was the period when Subhas Chandra Bose who, after C.R. Das, was the only Congress leader from Bengal of national fame, joined Das. C.R. Das's arrest on the tenth of December 1921 was preceded by the arrest of his life partner, Srimati Basanti Devi, for hawking Khadi on the 7th December but was; however, released later. C.R. Das

was sentenced to imprisonment for six months under the notorious section (Sec. 17) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Elected President of the Ahmedabad session of the Congress while in prison, his speech had to be read out in the session. Then came the mass civil disobedience movement launched at Bardoli by Gandhiji, later to be withdrawn after the Chauri Chaura incident at Gorakhpur along with a ban on all activities of the Congress volunteers. C.R. Das is reported to have been annoyed with Gandhiji for taking this step as perhaps several other contemporary Congress leaders also were. What is now recognised as the basic strength of Gandhiji's thinking that led to the action he took appeared differently to his friends and followers at the time.

THE GAYA CONGRESS

Councils entry and the use of that forum to demonstrate India's non-cooperation with the British rulers was never given up by C.R. Das. Elected again President of the Gaya Congress in December 1922, he resigned the office when a resolution on Council entry was lost and with him Pandit Motilal Nehru, who was Secretary of the All-India Congress, also came out. The incident gave birth to the Swarajya Party. There was, however, no break away from the parent organisation. In the light of what has been happening in the country for the last twelve months, it is significant to note that even Jawaharlal Nehru along with P. D. Tandon sponsored a move in a Bombay meeting in May 1923 to say that all Congressmen should close their ranks and present a united front and stop all propaganda amongst the voters in furtherance of the Gaya resolution Even so, things were not smooth in the body politic of the Congress and dissensions were apparent.

It was however in a special session of the Congress in Delhi in September 1923, that Das and Nehru and their way and a resolution moved by Moulana Azad lifted the boycott of Councils. It must have pleased Das as he was faced with accusations and insinuations of ambivalence and uncertainty because of his opposition to the boycott of Councils. The resulting success, so far as elections to the Bengal legislature was concerned, where all the Moderates were routed, led to an invitation from the Governor to Das to form a ministry which he naturally refused.

GANDHIJI'S VIEW

The period that followed was not a period of plain sailing for the Swarajya party. Gandhiji's opposition to Congressmen entering the councils was deep-rooted. Obviously, to him meeting with British Governmental machinery and personnel at any level was wrong as it might weaken India's determination to fight the oppressors till the end. One could see this influence operating on Gandhiji up to the days of the Cripps Mission and even during the days of the holding of the final discussion with the British. In the circumstances, the Swarajya party leaders were constantly checkmated from within, while the obvious weakening of the intensity of attack made the British rulers resort to repression in varying degress. The arrest of Congressmen in Bengal, notably Chandra Bose, in the fall of 1924, under Regulation III was a clear indication of British determination to crush all opposition while at the same time embarassing those Indian leaders who did not want to blow up bridges.

Analysed at this distance of time, the motives and intentions of the no-changers and the Swarajists, the differnces appear to be mainly on the question of contacts being maintained with the opponents while carrying on the fight for freedom on all fronts to carry on the fight free from such contacts, if need be, from the wilderness. Time and again, the latter idea dominated as history shows. To an intellectual like C.R. Das, who was at the same time emotional these trends must have caused great mental strain leaning to an acceleration of his ill health. Such conflicts arose in C.R. Das's mind in regard to another matter of great importance in his time and sadly enough even today. That is the attitude of the Congress to violence Gandhiji's attitude was always clear. I believe he never gave it up, even though for the sake of unity he had to accept embarrasing compromises. In May 1924, Deshabandhu Das supported a resolution passed at the Bengal Provincial Conference appreciating the spirit of self-sacrifice exhibited by Gopinath Saha who was condemned to be hanged for the murder of an Englishman Ernest Day, whom Gopinath Saha had mistaken for the Calcutta Commissioner of Police, Tegart. In the Ahmedabad session of the A.I.C.C., the same resolution was turned down on the ground that the Congress cannot condone violence even though C.R. Das supported it. Nevertheless, C.R. Das in a

statement issued on May 1925 has said : "I have made it clear always and I do it once again that I am opposed to the principle of polities, assossination and violence in any shape or from. It is absolutely abhorrent to me and my party".

LAST OF STALWARTS

Illness dogged him in his last days and he moved to Darjeeling for rest. The lion (but one) of the political stalwarts of Bengal passed away in the afternoon of the 15 June 1925. In the whirlpool of political events that followed over the next ten decades, the personality of Deshabandhu been shadowed. As I had said before, deffence contemporaneous estimate of the Deshbandhu deffered widely. Thus, we come across a some what acid criticism of him by Pattabhi Sitaramayya who attributes his ostensible disharmony to his having been a alwyer. Of his generosity and his indifference to waith and prosperity all are agreed. About has political attitudes from time to time, no Judgment can be passed as obviously the cirumstances prevailing and his outlook on them determined his course of action. His attitude to Hindu-Muslim and Congress league conflicts was dictated by a desire for peace between the communities while both the communities took their respective share of responsibility in the future governance of the country and to Das, the acceptance of the principle of joint electorates was the keystone to the arch of Hindu-Muslim unity.

DAS WAS RIGHT

That was not to be and Bengal had to be divided. Council entry as part of the maintenance of the other side of the agitation for freedom was dear to his heart. In the sequel and to a person like the writer who had some experience of the use of that front against the British in the legislature being maintained even in a highly truncated from, C.R. Das was right. Again, even at the risk of repeating myself, it has to be emphasised that Das's attitude to violence, having grown up during the days of 1905 and, thereafter, was clear. If one blames him for the Gopinath Saha resolution, one might also blame Gandhiji for the Bhagat Singh resolution of the Karachi Congress of 1931 or approve of the chuckling comment of Subhash Chandra Bose when he said :

"So far as Mahatma was concerned, he had to make his conscience over the action somewhat elastic". It is needless for me to add that Mahatmaji needs no apologia from me and if he did express no dissent at the time of the Karachi Congress, he must have done so because he felt that the situation so far as his partymen were concerned was well in hand.

Let me conclude. More than at any time in the history of India we now need men of Chittaranjan Das's stature, his emotions, his intellect, his ability to differ and press his point of view time and again and yet not separate. And Bengal now needs a leader of his character and vision more than any other part of India.

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THE PASSING OF C.R. DAS

The sudden death of Mr. C.R. Das has plunged the country into a gloom nature of which has not been witnessed since the passing of another great patriot five years ago—Bal Gangadhar Tilak. They were both alike in many respects. Both had the same overpowering passion for service, both had borne the brunt of the battle, both had suffered and sacrificed their all for the country. They were alike in their indomitable courage, and incessant activity and they inspired a love and devotion in their followers seldom excelled even in this land of generous enthusiasms. Leaders of a far flung country they were yet the idol of their respective Provinces in a special and endearing sense. The Deshabandhu was to the Mahratta—a name to conjure with. It is the tragedy of Indian public life that leaders like these should be cut off in the prime of life. Both died in a blaze of glory, when they were at the height of their power. For next to Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Das was the most outstanding figure in the public life of India since the passing of the great Mahratta patriot with whom Mr. Das had so much in common. Mr. Gandhi wrote in Young India :

> The giant among men has fallen, Bengal is like a widow today. He was a hero of a hundred battles. He was generous to a fault. I felt forlorn when cruel fate snatched away Lokmanya from us. I have not yet got over the shock for I am yet wooing his dearly beloved disciples but Deshabandu's withdrawal leaves me in worse plight.

Born of a gifted family in Calcutta on November 5, 1870, Mr. Das was barely 55 at his death. After graduating in 1890 he proceeded to England to qualify himself for the Civil Service. He did not, however, compete for the I.C.S. but joined the Inns of Court and was called to the Bar in 1894. On his return to India he joined the Calcutta Bar where notwithstanding his distinguished qualities he had to struggle hard for a living. Subsequently however, he won an assured position among the foremost practitioners in Calcutta and acquired a substantial fortune. In 1904 be distinguished himself by his successful defence of Babu Arabindo Ghose. In 1910 he made his mark in the Dumraon Case and from that time onward he became the leader of the Bar, a position which he relinquished in 1921 at the call of Non-Cooperation. He gave up his lucrative practice. His forceful advocacy of Non-Cooperation soon won for him a high place in the hierarchy of Congress leaders. He was elected President of the Ahmedabad Congress in 1921 but was arrested about a week before the Congress met for issuing a public appeal for volunteers in defiance of the orders of the Bengal Government. In February 1922 he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. One still recalls his reverberating message :

> I feel the hand-cuffs on my wrist and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left. What matters is whether I am dead or alive.

He presided over the Gaya Congress of 1922 and in the next year, in company with Pandit Motilal Nehru organised the Swarajya Party which is virtually in charge of the political programme of the Congress. It was mainly his forceful and inspiring personality that has kept the Swarajya Party in Bengal intact and the successful way he organised and disciplined his party was soon manifest in the wreeking of the Dyarchic Council. Whatever one may think of this wreeking programme, Mr. Das was a supreme force to be reckoned with in the politics of Bengal and the bureaucracy came to grips with the easy antogonist. For Mr. Das's word was law. Mr. Das had been

in recent years when Surendranath Banerjee was in the Partition days—the uncrowned King of Bengal by his skilful dealing with his colleagues and his inspiring example of personal sacrifices was able to organise a well-disciplined and powerful party of opposition inside the Council and outside which could not be trifled with. Shortly after his return from the Belgaum Congress he took ill; but his work was so much in his heart that he insisted on attending the March Session of the Council which carried the rejection of the Ministers' salary on the fateful 23rd. On April 7 he was also elected Mayor of Calcutta. Then came the remarkable manifesto on revolutionaries which has created such a favourable atmosphere for reconciliation and peace. And finally this speech at Faridpur set the seal on his manifesto and reversed the impression created by the much misunderstood resolution of Serajgunj. Mr. Das had by that one speech changed the whole aspect of the present depressing situation. A way was opened for mutual understanding and peace and it was expected that Government would take advantage of this splendid opportunity. While at Darjeeling, for his health Mr. Das wrote to Pandit Motilal Nehru :

> The most critical time in our history is coming. There must be solid work done at the end of the year and the beginning of the next. All our resources will be taxed and here we are both of us ill. God knows what will happen.

During his stay at Darjeeling, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Besant had long interviews with Mr. Das and it was expected that a united appeal for a united Congress was to be made. It is a pity that at such a time Mr. Das should have been torn away from the work he loved so well.

Mr. Das's example of personal sacrifice has been inspiring—especially among the youth of Bengal who have idolised him. Indeed there are few parellels to his undoubted personal sacrifices for it is common knowledge that he had given away most of his earnings as public benefactions. Only a few months ago he gave away his immense properties for various charities. One gift of his touches the deeper than all. It may be recounted in the words of Mr. Gandhi who wrote not long ago after

a visit to 148 Russa Road, Mr. Das's great mansion in Calcutta :

> "I knew that the house no longer belonged to Deshbandhu Das. I knew that he contemplated making over that beautiful mansion to a board of trustees in order to divest himself of the last vestige of wealth that he possessed in this world. But as a man of the world, when I actually entered the house with the knowledge that its distinguished owner had voluntarily dispossessed himself of it, I could not help shedding a tear. I felt a wrench within me that the cause was no longer Mr. Das's and when I heard that to had not yet been able to repair his broken-down constitution. I felt doubly grieved and my grief was still further increased when I received a brief but beautiful and loving message from him, written by him in pencil, telling me how it was impossible for him to stand the double strain and why, therefore, he had gone a way to Faridpur in advance. May God grant him health and long life to serve the country which he loves so dearly."

But that was not to be. Mr. Das has died in harness and "his sun has gone down while it was day." "He warmed both hand before the fire of life. It sank and he was ready to depart" "Whatever controversies may be raged round his actions and career," wrote the *Statesman*," the fact stands out that he was a leader in a thousand and a power in the land."

The sudden and dramatic death of this great tribune of Bengal inspired the warmest tributes from all quarters. Mahatma Gandhi to whom the sad news was communicated by Acharya Roy at Khulna broke down visibly. He signalised the occasion by publicly declaring his resolve to give even more help to the followers of Das than he had hitherto done in their Council programme. Later in the day, before leaving for Calcutta to attend the funeral, he spoke in touching terms of the greatness of Das :

> Mr. Das was one of the greatest of men. I have had the privilege of knowing him for the last six years. The closer I came to him the more I came to love him. I saw during

my brief stay at Darjeeling that no thought but that of the welfare of India occupied his mind. He dreamed and thought and talked of the freedom of India and of nothing else.
Those who had differences with him, those who bitterly criticised him, did not hesitate to admit that no other man could take his place in Bengal. He was fearless. He was brave. His love for the young men of Bengal was boundless. There is not a young man but has told me that never had his request to Mr. Das for help gone in vain. He earned lakhs and gave away lakhs to the young men of Bengal. His sacrifice was matchless and who am I to talk of his great intellect and his statesmanship ? On more than one occasion at Darjeeling he told me that the freedom of India depends on non-violence and truth. The Hindus and Mussalmans of India should know that his heart knew no difference between the Hindus the Mussalmans. I would like to tell all Englishmen in India that he bore no ill-will to them. "If I live, I live for Swaraj. If I die, I die for Swaraj. "That was his vow to his Motherland.

Soon after his death, Mr. Gandhi, Lord Sinha, Sir Surendernath Bannerjee and other prominent men issued an appeal for a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs for the erection of a fitting public memorial. The memorial is to take the form of a hospital for women irrespective of caste or creed, and an institution for the training of nurses. Whilst the required Rs. 10 lakhs might come from ten millionaires, Mr. Gandhi specially urged it desirable that the amount should be made up chiefly from the poor.

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DEFEAT OF DAS

INDULAL K. YAGNIK

How did Mr. Gandhi succeed in conquering the opposition of the stalwarts and veterans of the Congress against his novel programme of non-co-operation ? And why did he succeed in capturing the imagination and firing the enthusiasm of a vast number of political workers and enthusiasts who had gathered there from all parts of India ? These are the Questions that we must now try to answer.

Let me begin by stating the grounds on which Deshabandhu Das—a brilliant and flourishing lawyer as he then was—who really acted throughout the proceedings as the spearhead of the entire opposition, opposed Mr. Gandhi. Just as Mr. Gandhi embodied within himself the spiritual purity, the ascetism and the gentleness of the Sages of the ancient India, Mr. Das on the other hand, represented the romantic patriotism, the militant enthusiasm and the modern intellectual clarity of modern India. The battle thus raged between the forces of emotional faith of Mr. Gandhi's cult on the one hand, and the intellectual forces of Mr. Das's militancy on the other.

After Mr. Gandhi had stated his case at the Subjects' Comittee, Mr. Das heckled him on the following lines. Of course, he agreed that he stood on common ground with Mr. Gandhi on certain points. He and his party were as determined as any other to secure justice for the Khilafat and for the Punjab (he was also a signatory with Mr. Gandhi to the Punjab Report) and above all to wrest the power from the oppressive Britishers so as to

render such atrocities impossible in the future. He, therefore, yielded to none in his passionate desire to paralyse, and if possible even to smash the machinery of the Government. Was, however, he pertinently asked, Mr. Gandhi's programme calculated to bring about such a result ? Would our boycott of the Councils serve really to wreck them ? Shall we not really thus play into the hands of the Government by making it a free gift of parasitical legislatures which could be made to register its degrees, and whose subservience it could flaunt before the eyes of the civilised world ? Then again, how was the boycott of Courts and Schools really relevant to our political fight against an oppressive Government ? He and his colleagues were quite prepared to sacrifice their practice at the Courts if they could really help to break the Government by so doing. He thought on the other hand that the entire triple boycott of Courts, Schools and Councils, though perhaps legitimate from the point of view of religious conscience, could not be deemed effective in serving the great political cause they all had at heart. Thus though starting from the same premises and sharing Mr. Gandhi's passion for destroying the Satanic Government, he most spiritedly asked Mr. Gandhi how the means of the triple boycott were at all calculated to fulfil the common political goal ?

Mr. Gandhi separate answers to all thes questions have been already summarised before. When put, however, to the necessity of presenting these various items as integral parts of a complete programme, Mr. Gandhi gave a somewhat novel presentation of his political philosophy. In effect, he explained that Councils, Courts and Schools formed indispensable links in the entire chain of Government machinery, which extended from the Viceroy sitting on the cloud-capped hills of Simla down to the pettiest Talati (village revenue clerk). who squeezed a few silver and copper coins from the starving peasants of the smallest village. He was out, he said, to destroy the entire system—or what meant the same thing to him, to remodel the whole structure according to popular will. He, therefore, wanted the millions of the country to purify their hearts and band themselves together in a fearless manner by cutting themselves off as far as possible from all unholy contact with the Satanic Government with a view eventually to enable them to hurl a final attack on the all-powerful enemy by means of the sovereign weapons of civil disobedience and non-

payment of taxes. Above all, he emphasised the supreme necessity of the doctrine of Love, Non-violence and Self-sacrifice, which alone would enable them, not only to carry out the education part of the programme including the building up of the Congress organisations, National Arbitration Courts and National Schools and Colleges —but would also release the disciplined forces of the Nation to carry out successfully the last and the most difficult stages of the great passive rebellion.

Now this presentation of Mr. Gandhi's case immediately placed Mr. Das and his colleagues under a series of handicaps. First and foremost, there was the personal factor. The galaxy of even educated man and women who crowded round the Committee table began to twit Mr. Das and other lawyers on their incapacity or unwillingness to sacrifice their enormous practices at the Law Courts. How could Mr. Das agree to the boycott of Courts, they said, when he was himself making such a fortune at the Courts every day ? Though Mr. Das and his compeers had put off their English suits and donned spotless white *dhotis* and shirts in honour of the occasion, the shrewd Bengali Indias told us "Do not believe in this show of simplicity. It is only meant to show off to Mr. Gandhi, and they will put on their foreign rags and make big money again at the Courts as soon as Mr. Gandhi's back is turned". Mr. Das's and other leading lawyers' opposition, therefore, to the boycott of Courts was greeted with cynical jokes by the back-benchers. And against them sat in striking contrast the thin. emaciated, ascetic figure of Mr. Gandhi, the saint, the prophet and the political mystic, who had long ago-renounced his big practice and his wealth in the service of the Nation, and was now about to lead the millions of India in a holy war against the foreign Government. He would succeed if only these pompous and pedantic lawyers would bend themselves humbly to his will, and help him. But would they. Such jibes and jokes, even more than the worth of Mr. Gandhi's argument, blasted the opposition of Mr. Das and his colleagues.

But Mr. Gandhi's programme only began with the triple or five-fold boycott, including that of honorary titles and foreign cloth. It did not end here, however. For the first time in the history of the Congress, Mr. Gandhi placed a programme of direct action. The boycotters themselves connoted practical action. But their value in terms of practical politics could he doubted. Not

so, however, the sterling worth of civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, which formed the last and the most formidable stage of the complete programme of non-co-operation. It has really dawned on many workers, specially since Mr. Gandhi set his foot or Indian soil, that the Congress had all these thirty years and more been locally submitting petitions and Resolutions to the Government. It had really followed the policy of mendicancy. It had occasionally discussed some lines and policies of action, but all that talk had really come to nothing. And now for the first time came a man with a complete programme of good practical action, which, in fact, amounted to nothing less than a nation-wide passive rebellion against the might of the British Empire. The action again was to begin now and here. And the man who presented this plain had not only put it to the test and achieved admirable results in South Africa, but had already practised it—on however limited a scale—on the battle-fields of Kaira and Champaran, and during the Rowlatt Act agitation. And the man suggested action; while Messrs. Das and Pal had nothing to offer except another Deputation to the Prime Minister, delay of decision for one more year—in fact, talk, talk and more talk. And as the political workers were enraged at the brutal policy of the Government and could not brook a moment's delay, they had no hesitation in voting for action—however, limited and visionary it might be—as against the continuance of the old Congress policy of empty Resolutions and pompous speeches.

But if such action was to be ultimately adopted on an effective and decisive scale, surely the Nation would have to be educated, disciplined and organised for it from now onwards. There was not a moment to lose. But how could the Nation be organised if big politicians imprisoned themselves in the Councils, and if big lawyears continued to make their piles at the Law Courts ? How could the youngmen of the country again be immured within the narrow confines of their Schools and Colleges if a holy war was to be effectively prosecuted against the Government ? Would they not be or greater service to their Motherland, if, like the youngmen of the belligerent countries during the Great War, they left their Schools to serve as soldiers in their national army under the leadership of their self-sacrificing teachers and others ? Thus Mr. Ghandi's programme appeared not only practical but fascinating and heroic in its vast and comprehensive scope, as it sought to line

up all the most promising elements of the nation in a united battle against the Satanic Government.

Nay more, Mr. Gandhi claimed that he had incorporated the essence of the old battle cry of the boycott of British goods and widened its scope in his new programme of the boycott of foreign cloth and the re-organisation of the old spinning and weaving industry of the country. Fight, by all means, he said, against the inroad of British textiles. But why not against the Japanese and American textiles too ? Do you desire to exchage British for Japanese for American domination ? For in his opinion we would invite the political mastery of the country whose textiles or other goods were imported on any large scale. And how could we effectually boycott the dumping of foreign cloth unless we produced sufficient to cloths our own people ? The immediate installation and multiplication of textile factories being ruled out as utterly impossible nothing remained for the nation except to concentrate on an intensive campaign to re-institute the spinning wheels and the weaving looms that would also serve to feel millions of Indian's starving poor. The spinning wheels, again, in his opinion, besides being an economically beneficent activity, would serve as a nucleus for all Congress activities in the thousands of villages, and would line up the peasants and even the old women working in their cottages with the vast army of town dwellers fighting for the freedom of India.

Mr. Gandhi thus, presented a fascinating possibility and a militant experiment. It might fail of its purpose. But even in that case the nation would not lose, but indeed gain in fearlessness and self confidence. On the other hand, their was always hope of success. And the Congress, sick of the tall talk of the older leaders, decided to give a sporting chance to the new Apostle of non-violent non-co-operation.

Of course, Mr. Gandhi's programme could have been subjected to a fusillade of criticism by any modern economists or sound political revolutionaries. They could have easily used their knowledge of Marxian Socialism and of the history of modern revolutions, to expose the fundamental defects in the whole structure that he had raised in a fit of subjective emotionalism, and individual advanturism. For instance, instead of stressing the various formal links in the machinery of Government, they would have more properly linked up the landlords and the capitalists—who

really form the strongest bulwarks of mordern capitalist imperialism—with the Government, in order to lead an attack against them for the exploitation of the people. They would also have asked the Congress to proclaim beforehand the inherent rights and the privileges of these peasants and workers of India, with a view to inspire them to range themselves in a solid phalanx under the leadership of the Congress. For it is undeniable that a glowing vision of better life conditions in the immediate future would serve to stiffen up the back of the toiling millions far more than the wrongs of a superstitions institution like the Khilafat, the past grievences of the distant Punjab, and even the vague dreams of political freedom. Such arguments could be easily elaborated and multiplied. But Mr. Das and his compeers did not stand in this respect on any higher ground than Mr. Gandhi and his Muslim friends. Both were sublimely ignorant of the new diagnosis of economic and political exploitation, and of the new technique of carrying out popular revolutions. Hence, nothing could stop Mr. Gandhi from achieving a certain victory, and the inaugurating of his non-violent campaign against the British.

It was, however, destined to be more than a mere political fight. Those who viewed the proceedings of the Calcutta Congress and the currents of political activity released in the country since then, would easily agree that the vast majority of the delegates at the Congress and of the millions who followed him afterwards, were not actuated by mere political motives. It has already been noted that Mr. Gandhi imported a new religious terminology in his propaganda since he espoused the Khilafat cause and the non-cooperation programme. India was not to fight for mere political liberty. It was out to instal nothing less than Ramrajya or Dharamarajya—the Empire of Truth and Love amidst a world torn by military ond economic disscusions. And as he proceeded with his vigorous propaganda in this matter, he went on elaborating the various points on which he wished to attack the foreign Government. If he wished, for instance, to fight the modern schools and English education that was being imported therein, it was not merely because they had been set up by foreign oppressors, but also because they constituted "an unmitigated evil" in themselves, and had "emasculated us, constrained our intellect" and thoroughly polluted the pristine purity of our national culture. Arguing once about the supposed advantages of English education derived by

men like Mr. Tilak and Rajah Rama Mohan Roy, Mr. Gandhi remarked that they were "so many pigmies, and had no hold upon the people compared with Chaitanya Shanker, Kabir and Nanak." And so he reverted continuously in the course of his discussions and arguments to the heroes of the past and gems of classical literature. And by the time that the Congress met in Calcutta he had succeeded in creating an atmosphere not only of political revolt but also of moral rebellion against the spins of the modern Satanic civilisation—which the British Government embodied for us in India—and a cultural rebellion against the imposition of foreign art, literature and modes of thought. And he went on idealising either ancient or mediaevel India, or creating imaginary pictures of a new order of society such as he had outlined in his book on "Hind-Swaraj.' It thus came to pass that the Congress, while adopting his non-co-operation programme, insensibly identified itself with a reactionary social philosophy and economic outlook, which loved to hark back to the dead past instead of moulding the inevitable future. And the ten years that have elapsed since then have served to show that while India did benefit in a certain measure by the programme of practical action that Mr. Gandhi outlined at Calcutta, it has paid a heavy price for it by committing itself to religious obscurantism and reactionary puritanism in all questions of social and economic reform, which really lie at the very foundation of all political problems.

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DESHABANDHU C.R. DAS IN POWER (1924-25)

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The year 1924 opened with an outlook hopeful in every direction, but the Swarajists had no time to rest. The elections to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, the largest municipality in India, were to be held in March. Thanks to the Minister for Local Self-Government, Sir Surendranath Bannerji, the Calcutta Municipal Act had been amended in 1923. Therein, larger powers had been conferred on the municipality, the franchise had been considerably enlarged and the elective element strengthened. Under the constitution, it was possible for the Swaraj Party to capture the municipal administration if they were successful at the polls. An intensive campaign was, therefore, started early in 1924 with the object of capturing the elected seats. So great was the enthusiasm of the people who attended in their thousands the meetings addressed by the Swarajist leaders that the election forecast was a very favourable one. As a matter of fact the Swaraj Party was returned with a very safe majority, a large number of the successful Swarajist candidates being Moslems. This result was all the more creditable because the elections were held on the basis of separate electorate, whereby Hindu voters alone could vote for Hindu candidates and Moslem voters for Moslem candidates. At the first meeting of the newly-elected municipal councillors, Deshabandhu Das was elected Mayor and Mr. Saheed Suhrawardy, a Moslem gentleman, Deputy-Mayor. The Corporation soon after appointed me as the Chief Executive

Officer, that is, the head of the municipal administration.[1] Though my appointment to this important post at the age of twenty-seven was generally approved in Swarajist circles, it did not fail to cause a certain amount of heart-burning in some circles within the party. To the Government it gave great annoyance and it was not without a great deal of hesitation that they decided to give their approval, as they were required to do under statute.

The election of the Deshabandhu as the first Mayor under the new constitution symbolised our capture of the Calcutta Municipality and was attended by popular demonstrations. Under the new regime, new measures calculated to benefit the citizens were set in motion in quick succession. The newly-elected Swarajist Councillors and Aldermen, including the Mayor, all came dressed in home-made Khadi. Among the employees of the Municipality, Khadi became the official uniform. Many of the streets and parks were renamed after India's greatest men. For the first time an Education Department was started and a distinguished Indian graduate of Cambridge[2] was put in charge. Free primary schools for boys and girls sprang up all over the city. Health-Associations, financed by the Municipality, were started in every ward of the city by public-spirited citizens for carrying on health propaganda among the people. Dispensaries were opened by the Municipality in the different districts for free medical treatment to the poor. In purchasing stores, preference was given to Swadeshi (i.e., home-made) goods. In making new appointments, the claims of Moslems and other minorities were recognised for the first time. Infant clinics were established in different parts of the city and to each clinic was added a milk-kitchen for supplying milk free to the children of the poor. Last, but not least, the Municipality arranged to give civic receptions to Nationalist leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. V.J. Patel, when they visited the city and the previous custom of giving civic receptions to Viceroys, Governors and officials was discontinued once for all.

The above measures adopted for promoting the welfare of the citizens brought about a new civic consciousness.[3] People for the first time began to look upon the Municipality as their own institution and upon Municipal officers and employees as Public

Servants and not bureaucrats. But the British vested interests in the city felt that they were losing their importance and that they could no longer dominate the Municipality. At that time nearly all the departmental heads were Britishers, but with one or two exceptions. I had no difficulty whatsonever in dealing with them. The majority of them were quite loyal to the new Swarajist administration and some of them were even enthusiastic in praising it. Though within a few months the efficiency of the administration was considerably raised and citizens' complaints were attended to more promptly than before, the official bloc in the Corporation, as also the Government, continued their policy of opposition, with the result that constant friction used to take place. In the mater of appointments, they were opposed to the Swarajist policy of doing justice to the minorities. With regard to the drainage problem of the city, they were also in conflict with the Swasajists. The scheme sponsored by the Government for the new drainage works was rejected by the Swarajists as being unscientific and useless. In this they had the support of the Drainage Engineer of the Municipality, the late Mr. O.J. Wilkinson and of the Director of Public Health, Dr. C.A. Bentley. while the Chief Engineer, Mr. J.R. Coats, was on the side of the Government. The drainage controversy between the Municipality and the Government continued for a long time and it took the Government ten years to give in to the Municipality on the drainage question.[4]

The doings of the Swaraj Party in the Calcutta Corporation would not have embarrassed the Government so much but for the fact that there was a simultaneous pressure on the latter from many quarters. In the Indian Legislative Assembly the Swaraj Party was fairly strong, and on behalf of the party notice of a resolution was given demanding the release of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi had fallen seriously ill on January 12th and had been operated upon. This news had caused anxiety and alarm from one end of the country to the other and there was a very strong public demand for his release. On the morning of February 5th, the day on which the above resolution was to be moved, the Mahatma was quietly released. A few days later, on February 8th, Pandit Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly, moved a resolution demanding that a Round Table Conference be convened for drawing up a

Constitution for India, establishing full responsible Government and that the new Constitution be placed before a newly-elected Indian Legislature and be submited before the British Parliament for being embodied in a statute. Replying to this resolution on behalf of the Government of India, Sir Malcolm Hailey promised an investigation into the complaints against and criticism of the Constitution. If after the investigation it was found that there was possibility of constitutional advance within the four corners of the Act, the Government would have no objection in making recommendations to the British Cabinet to that effect. But if, on the other hand, further constitutional advance involved an amendment of the Government of India Act, 1919, then the Government could not promise any action at that stage. This reply was extremely disappointing and as a retort, the Assembly threw out some of the demands for grants and refused leave to introduce the entire Finance Bill. The Finance Bill had, therefore, to be restored with the help of the special powers of certification vested in the Viceroy.

The debate over the demand for a Round Table Conference was followed by the appointment of a Committee with the following terms of reference—to inquire into the difficulties arising from or the defects inherent in the working of the Government of India Act, 1919; to tnvestigate the feasibility and desirability of securing remedies for such difficulties and defects, consistent with the structure, policy and purpose of the Act, either by action taken under the Act and the rules or by such amendments of the Act as appear necessary to rectify any administrative imperfections. This Committee was presided over by the Home Member, Sir Alexander Muddiman and among the members were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Allahabad), Sir Sivaswami Aiyer (Madras), Mr. M.A. Jinnah (Bombay) and Dr. Paranjpye (Poona)—all of them being Liberal (Moderate) politicians—who submitted a minority report. The Committee as a whole reported that there were serious defects in the Constitution and in the manner in which it had been worked. The majority of the members, consisting mostly of officials, recommended a number of minor modifications which would help the working of the Constitution. The minority reported that such modification of the Constitution would be of little avail and that a satisfactory operation of the Constitution would be possible only when it was

revised with a view to introducing responsible government in the provinces and at least a measure of responsibility in the Central Government. It should be noted in this connection that the Swaraj Party in the Assembly did not co-operate with the Muddiman Committee in any way and the report of the Committee was altogether disappointing from, the Swarajist point of view.

While the major issues were being tackled by its members in the Assembly, the Swaraj Party was following obstructive tactics in all the provincial legislatures. In the Assembly there was hardly and room for obstruction or deadlock because the Viceroy could easily override the legislature by his special powers of 'veto' and 'certification'. Moreover, all the departments of the Central Government were administered by members who were under the full control of the Viceroy and were neither elected members of the Assembly nor removable by a vote of that body. In the provinces, on the other hand, the departments called 'transferred' departments were administered by 'ministers' who were elected members of the provincial legislature and were subject to the vote of that body—while the other departments, called 'reserved' departments, were administered by members who were quite independent of the vote of the legislature.[5] The Swarajist tactics in the provincial legislatures, therefore, consisted in attacking the ministers and their 'transferred' departments. The salaries of the ministers would be either rejected altogether, in which case no ministers could be appointed at all—or votes of no-confidence in the ministers would be moved repeatedly so that no set of ministers could continue in office long. At the same time attempts would be made to throw out the Budget of the transferred departments which could not be restored by certification. By such tactics, the Governor of the province would be forced to suspend the working of the transferred departments, take over the administration into his own hands and go on ruling as he would in the pre-reform days. In the Central Provinces Legislative Council where the Swarajists had an absolute majority—the entire Budget was thrown out without any difficulty and no ministers could therefore, be appointed. In Bengal the situation was somewhat similar to that in the Central Provinces. The salaries of the ministers were rejected and repeated attempts to restore them proved unavailing. The ministers had therefore,

to lay down their office. Thus, in the Central Provinces and in Bengal, the working of the constitution was rendered impossible. It is not possible to describe the enthusiasm of the public when diarchy was overthrown in these two provinces. It was regarded as a great triumph for the Swarajists and this victory brought a sense of ciation all over the country. In 1920, the Congress had tried to paralyse the new constitution, by boycotting the polls but this attempt had failed, because not a single seat had remained vacant and undesirable men had flooded the legislatures. In 1924, on the other hand, the Swarajists, by carrying the fight inside the legislatures, were able to wreck the constitution, in at least some of the provinces.

People belonging to the Liberal Party and even 'No-Changer' Congressmen have not sometimes been able to understand the utility of the Swarajist policy of constitutional obstruction. They argue that if ministers are allowed to continue in office they could do more good than if those departments are taken over by the Governor and his officials. As against that, the Swarajists argue that three years' experience (1920-23) has shown that there is hardly any scope for useful work for a minister under the constitution of 1919. All the more important departments, like public security, justice, prisons, finance, etc., are in the hands of officials and the budget allotments for these departments are made first. What is left is handed over to the ministers and this amount is so inadequate that it barely suffices for their minimum establishment, rendering it quite impossible to undertake nation-building work on a decent scale. Moreover, the principal officials working under the ministers, including their secretaries, cannot be subjected to disciplinary action by them and being quite independent of the legislature in the matter of their pay and emoluments, they are not responsive to popular sentiment. In these circumstances, the unhampered working of the constitution cannot benefit the country in any way—whereas successful obstruction not only brings pressure to bear on the Government by putting obstacles in its path, but also develops a spirit of resistance in the country as a whole. As a matter of fact, when the constitution of the Swaraj Party was first drawn up in March 1923, it was explicitly stated in the preamble that the object of the Swarajist policy was to create an atmosphere of resistance to the bureaucracy, without which the Government

could never be made to respond to popular demands.

While the Swarajists were enjoying the first flush of victory, the Labour Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, in a striking speech delivered in the House of Lords, analysed the causes which led to the birth of Swarajism in India. Among the causes he mentioned were—firstly, the resolution passed by the House of Lords supporting General Dyer, the author of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre; secondly, the 'steel-frame speech' of the Premier, Mr. Lloyd George, in 1922, eulogising the Indian Civil Service; thirdly, the doubling of the Salt Tax by the Government of India, in 1923, in the teeth of tense popular opposition and despite the adverse vote of the Indian Legislative Assembly; and fourthly, the injustice meted out to Indians in the Crown Colony of Kenya in Africa. This clever and sympathetic analysis or the causes of the Indian unrest leading to the birth of the Swaraj Party, showed that for once at least the India Office in London was able to appreciate public sentiment and public opinion in India. It is to be regretted, therefore, that this understanding was not followed up by appropriate action.

Not content with his activities in the legislature, the Municipality and in other directions, the Deshabandhu launched another important movement at this time—the Tarakeswar Satyagraha movement. Not far from Calcutta, at a place called Tarakeswar, there is an old temple of 'Baba Taraknath' or 'Shiva'. As in the case of other holy shrines, there was considerable property attached to the temple, which had been endowed in order to provide for its upkeep. Following the Hindu custom, there was a trustee, called the Mohunt, in charge of the temple and the attached property. Though the Mohunts are expected to live a chaste and abstemious life, there were allegations against the Mohunt of Tarakeswar with regard to his personal character and to his administration of the endowed property. As Tarakeswar happens to be one of the most holy places of poligrimage in Bengal and is visited every year the people from all parts of the province, the allegations made against the Mohunt were widely known. After the success of the Akali movement in the Punjab, pressure was brought to bear on the Bengal Congress Committee for starting a similar movement at Tarakeswar. Notices were served on the Mohunt calling upon him to mend his ways but as these attempts were of no avail, in April 1924, the Deshabandhu

launched a movement for taking peaceful possession of the temple and the attached property, with a view to placing them under the administration of a public committee. The Mohunt appealed to the Government for help and as soon as volunteers began to move towards temple and the palace of the Mohunt—the police appeared on the scene. The usual Satyagraha scenes were re-enacted at Tarakeswar—peaceful volunteers moving up from one side and police attacking them mercilessly on the other and occasionally making arrests. Owing to the intervention of the Government, the issue became a political one. Once again, in order to set an example to the people, the Deshabandhu sent his son to prison at the head of the volunteers. Within a short time, the movement became extremely popular and there was a warm response from every corner of the province.[6]

In May 1924, the annual conference of Bengal Congressmen, called the Provincial Conference, was held at a place called Sirajganj, Prior to this the Deshabandhu had drawn up an agreement between Hindus and Moslems, covering religious as well as political questions, but it had been rejected by the Coconada Congress in December 1923, on the ground that it conceded too much to the Moslems. This agreement, known as the Bengal Pact—was placed before the Sirajganj Conference for ratification. There was a stormy debate and the political opponents of the Deshabandhu, joined by some reactionary Hindus, put up a formidable opposition. Nevertheless, the passionate eloquence of the leader carried the day and the Bengal Pact was adopted by a large majority. After this, another resolution was discussed and passed which was to stir up a honest's nest in the days to come. This was the Gopinath Saha resolution. Some months earlier, a young student, named Gopinath Saha, had attempted to assassinate the Commissioner of Police of Calcutta, Sir Charles Tegart. Through mistaken identity, he shot at and killed another Englishman, Mr. Day. At the trial before the High Court of Calcutta, Shah made a statement which created a sensation at the time. He stated in effect he really had intended to murder the Police Commissioner and expressed his sincere sorrow for having killed the wrong person. He was glad to pay with his life and hoped that every drop of his blood would sow the seeds of freedom in every Indian home. Saha was sentenced to death by High Court and duly hanged. But, after his death, resolutions

were passed in several meetings in Bengal appreciating his courage and spirit of sacrifice. while condemning his action. A similar resolution was unanimously passed at the Siraiganj Conference and it caused considerable annoyance to the Government.

While these stirring events were happening in Bengal, interesting developments were taking place elsewhere. Mahatma Gandhi, as we have already seen, was released on February 5th. He went to a seaside resort near Bombay for rest and change of climate. After some weeks he was able to take interest once again in public affairs and gradually to assume his normal activities. Speculation at once arose as to what attitude Gandhiji would take up with regard to the Swaraj Party. On principle he was of course bitterly opposed to the Swaranjist policy of 'Council-entry', nevertheless, he did not adopt a hostile attitude. It may be that he found the position of the Swarajists to be too strong in the country to be able to overthrow them and so he bowed to the inevitable. Or it may be that he felt that the changed circumstances in the country warranted a change in tactics. Be that as it may, he met the Swarajist leaders, Deshabandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru and arrived at an understanding with them. This agreement, known as the Gandhi-Das Pact, was to the effect that the Mahatma was to devote himself to the Khadi campaign, while the Swarajists were to be in charge of the political campaign. In order to carry on his work without any interference on the part of the Congress or the Swaraj Party, the Mahatma was empowered to organise an autonomous body to be called the All-India Spinners' Association. This body was to have its own funds and its own Secretariat.

The Swaraj Party, on the other hand, was to carry on its work as an autonomous body independently of the Congress and to have its own Secretariat.[7] The alliance the struck between the Mahatma and Swaraj Party soon ripened into friendship as a result of conciliatory statements made by the former from time to time. On one occasion, for instance, he said in his characteristic style, 'My political conscience is in the keeping of the Swarajists.' On another occasion he is reported to have remarked : 'I shall cling to the Swaraj Party as a child clings to its mother.'

After establishing peace within the Congress camp though his understanding with the Swaraj Party, the Mahatma turned to another acute problem. Since 1923, Hindu-Moslem dissensions

had appeared in different part of India and Mahatama Gandhi was farsighted enough to realise that if the evil was not nipped in the bud, it would soon grow into a national calamity. The communal storm might not break while the Swarajist campaign, supported by both Hindus and Moslems, was in ful swing—But the moment there was a full in the campaign, the evil was sure to rear its head. So in September 1924, at his instance a Unity Conference was convened at Delhi. The Conference was largely attended, even the Anglican Metropolitan of India and representatives of the Britishers in India, praticipating in it. At the time of the Conference the Mahatma embarked on a three weeks' fast as a self-imposed penance for the wrongs committed by members of different communities who by their action disturbed inter-communal peace in India. The Conference was a successful one. A formula was devised for promoting unity between the different communities in India and a Conciliation Board of fifteen members was set up which was to intervene whenever and wherever any communal trouble arose. In spite of the success of the Unity Conference, practical results did not follow. In March 1924, Mustapha Kemal Pasha took the extraordinary set of abolishing the Khalifate altogether. Those Moslems who had been drawn towards the Indian National Congress owing to the desire to secure support for the Khilafat campaign, no longer felt any urge to remain friendly towards the Congress. The Khilafat Committees themselves went out of existence in most parts of India and many of the erstwhile members of those organisations were absorbed into reactionary mushroom organisations. About this time the All-India Moslem League came back to life again. This body had been the premier organisation for Moslems in India till 1920. Since that year it had been practically replaced by the All-India Khilafat Committee which had succeded in drawing most of the active elements among the Indian Moslems. The abolition of the Khalifate by the Turks themselves, struck at the root of the Chilafat Committees in India and indirectly helped the revival of the All-Indian Moslem League. In December 1924; when the All-India Moslem League met once again, the Khilafatists were defeated for the first time since 1920. The newly-revived All-India Moslem League, as we shall see later, became more sectarian and reactionary than it had been prior to 1920.

About the middle of 1924, matters began to approach a

crisis once again. This crisis was of course different in character from that of 1921-22. The Governmet felt hard-pressed from all sides. Not only in Bengal, but throughout the country, the local bodies (municipalities. district, etc.) were coming under the control of the Nationalists. and to that extent official power and influence were being eliminated. In all the legistatures, a stiff fight was being waged and in two provinces, Central Provinces and Bengal, the working of the new constitution was paralysed. In Bengal, the Tarakeswar Satyagraha, though it began as a movement for the reform of the temple administration, soon developed into a political movement and gradually assumed serious proportions. Over and above this, according to the Government, there was a strong undercurrent of revolutionary activity and the Government were particularly annoyed by public resolutions. praising the revolutionary Gopinath Saha, though the appreciation was of a qualified and conditional character. In August, when the influence of the Swaraj Party was at its height, the annual conference of the Party was held in Calcutta. Leaders from the different provinces were present on the occasion. The attendance was large and the enthusiam very great. That was the signal for the Government to strike. During the last twelve months they had not been altogether inactive and had been closely following events. Soon after the Delhi Congress in September 1923, a number of Congress workers belonging to the Swaraj party of Bengal had been suddenly arrested and put in prison without any trial under an old regulation called 'Regulation III of 1818'. The explanation given by the Government at the time was that the revolutionary movement was raising its head again and it was therefore, necessary to resort to speedy suppression. Though the arrests created considerable resentment at the time, it was not followed by any further developments and the excitement gradually subsided. After a year, the Government decided to repeat those tactics again. They did not know how to suppress the Swaraj Party otherwise. The activities of the Party, except in the case of the Tarakeswar Satyagrah and similar campaigns, were carried on within the bounds of the law, but they caused considerable embarassment to the Government; nevertheless the Government could not take and legal proceedings against the Swarajists. All attempts to suppress the Tarakeswar Satyagaraha campaign had not only failed but had served to evoke greater

enthusiasm on the part of the people. In sheer desperation the Government therefore decided to strike at the root of the organisation and since that was not possible through a trial in a court of law, they resolved to imprison some of the principal organisers of the Swaraj Party without trial.

On October 25th, 1924, in the early hours of the morning they made a clean sweep of a large number of Cengressmen in Calcutta and other places in Bengal. These arrests were made partly under Regulation III of 1818, agd partly under an emergency ordinance (called the Bengal Ordinance) promulgated by the Viceroy at midnight on October 24th. This ordinance conferred on the Government of Bengal powers of arrest and imprisonment similar to those conferred on the Government of India by Regulation III of 1818, and the ordinance was issued in order to help the Government of Bengal to order arrest and imprisonment without trial of persons in Bengal, without any reference to the Government of India. Among these arrested were two promient Swarajist members of the Bengal Legislative Council, Mr. Anil Baran Roy and Mr. S.C. Mitra, and myself. Some of the warrants, as in the case of three of us, had been issued under the Regulation, whereas in the case of the others, they had been issued nnder the newly-promulgated Bengal Ordinance. The warrants under the Regulation had been signed as early as July last, the day after the Government were finally defeated in their attempt to retain the ministers in office and work the diarchical constitution. It has not been explained yet as to why the warrants had not been executed for nearly three months. The conjecture generally made is that the Bengal Government waited for sanction to a larger number of arrests and also for the promulgation of the Bengal Ordinance. Moreover, the whole matter had to be placed before the then Labour Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, and so the delay was unaviodable. With regard to the *raison d'etre* of these arrests, the public notion at the time was that the pressure of the Swarajists in the total bodies (especially the Calcutta Municipality), in the legislatures and at Tarakeswar had unnerved the Government. And the reason why they struck only in Bengal, was that the anti-Government forces were strongest in that province.

The large number of arrests made so suddenly and unexpectedly on October 25th, created tremendous excitement in

the country. Official circles came out with the excuse that a revolutionary conspiracy was on foot and the arrests had to be made before anything serious happened. But it was hard to persuade the public that those who had been arrested were engaged in a revolutionary conspiracy. Public clamour against the arrests continued to be very strong and one month after my arrest, Government began to think seriously of releasing me. But the prestige of the police, at whose instance the arrests had been made, stood in the way and the proposal had to be dropped. The agitation over my arrest was the strongest at the time because the public thought that the object of the Government was to strike at the Swarajist administration of the new Corporation. Everyone knew, including the extreme loyalists, that I was engaged day and night in my municipal duties and had been force to give up politics altogether, since I was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Official and semi-official circles were, therefore, at pains to put forwaed an excuse for the arrests which would find some credence among the public. The Anglo-Indian papers of Calcutta, *The Statesman* and *The Englighman* (now defunct), came out which statements to the effect that I was the brain of the revolutionary conspiracy. My solicitors at once filed legal proceedings against both the papers for defamation. The proceedings dragged on for months and in the meantime attempts were made to secure the help of the Government in the suit in the matter of obtaining proofs to substantiate the charges made against me in the Press in support of the Government. As the Government did not agree to help in the matter, an attempt was made te secure the assistance of the India Office in London. By that time there had been a change in the Cabinet in England. A General Election had taken place in October and as a result of the search created by the Zinovieff letter, there had been a landslide in favour of the Conservative Party. Following the defeat of the Labour Party at the polls, the Labour Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, had made room for the Conservative Secretary of State, Lord Birkenhead. Though the India Office was inclined to help the Anglo-Indian papers in the suit brought against them for defamation, they were unable to find any documentary evidence to prove my complicity in a revolutionary conspiracy. *Forward*, the Swarajist paper of Calcutta, happened to get hold of and publish a letter, written to Calcutta from London

on the subject, in which an agent of the India Office was reported to have said that I had been arrested on the verbal testimony borne against me by certain people, but that there was no documentary evidence against me. The publication of this letter further embarrassed the Government.

No one in India felt these persecutions more than Deshabandhu Das did. In a magnificent speech delivered from the Mayoral chair of the Calcutta Corporation, he give vent to the deep indignation which stirred the public at the time. He accepted full responsibility for what the Chief Executive Officer had done and challenged the Government to arrest him. The Government did not accept the challenge but replied in a different way. They opened negotiations with him for a settlement of the entire Indian question. At that time, Mahatma Gandhi was politically a back-number. He had confined himself to the Khadi campaign, having retired from the political movement which was under the control of the Swarajist leaders. The memory of the negotiations in December 1921, had left an impression on the official mind that it was possible to come to an understanding with the Deshabandhu if the major issues were tackled in an earnest and sincere manner. Lord Lytton personally had a very high appreciation of him as a man. And at the time no official felt the pressure of the popular movement more than the Governor of Bengal did. In those days, to settle with the Congress meant to settle with Deshabandhu C.R. Das. Therefore, unknown to the outside world, negotiations between the Deshabandhu and the Governor of Bengal, Lord Lytton, went on for some months.

With his shrewd political instinct, the Deshbandhu thought of making use of the public feeling roused by the arrests of October 1924. He appealed at once for a fund to be used for national reconstruction. The economic situation in the country was not favourable and many people thought that the response to the appeal would be disappointing. But the leader knew better. In spite of unfavourable forecasts, he had a very good response and that was a further proof of public confidence in him. At the end of the year, the annual session of the Congress was held at Belgaum in Bombay Presidency. This Congress was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi and it was the last Congress attended by Deshabandhu. The proceedings were marked by extreme cordiality between the Mahatma and the Swarajists. The principal

programme of work adopted for the coming year was the extension of home-spinning and home-weaving and it was enjoined on every member of the Congress to produce a certain quantity of yarn as his membership subscription. The only other significant fact about the Belgaum Congress was the attempt of Mrs. Annie Besant to gether Commonwealth of India Bill ratified by the Congress. This Bill, which was to confer Home Rule on India, had been drafted by her and her intention was to have it introduced in the British Parliament as a private Bill. She felt that her hands would be considerably strengthened if the Congress save the stamp of approval to her pet constitution, but none of the Congress leaders would be drawn into her net. She, therefore, had to leave the Belgaum Congress disappointed.

The political situation remained unchanged when the year 1925 was ushered in. Deshabandhu Das continued in power. In the early part of 1925, there was a further trial of strength between the Government and the Swarajists in Bengal. The Ordinance which the Governor-General had promulgated in October 1924, conferring on the Bengal Governor powers of summary arrest and imprisonment without trial, was to expire in April 1925. Thereafter, if the Bengal Government desired to have those powers, they would have to introduce legislation to that effect in the Bengal Legislative Council. A Bill was, therefore duly introduced and the Government strained every nerve to have it passed into law. As the Swarajists were really in a minority in the Legislative Council, the Government felt hopeful that they would be able to carry the legislation through. The Deshabandhu was then taking rest at Patna as he had been suffering from a nervous breakdown. But in spite of his ill-health, he resolved to inflict a crushing defeat on the Government in person. On the appointed day he arrived at the Council Hall in time and had actually to be carried in an invalid-chair. Once again the laurels of the day were his. The Bill was thrown out, but by virtue of the extraordinary powers given to the Governor under the Constitution, he was able to certify the Bill as law.

Soon after this incident the annual conference of Bengal Congressmen was summoned at Faridpur and in view of the critical situation in the country, Deshabandu Das was elected President. Against all medical advice, he resolved to go there and preside over the deliberations. People did not understand at the

time why he was so insistent on attending this conference. Anything that he said would have drawn the same amount of attention even if it happened to be a Press statement. The real reason, however, as to why he wanted to go there was that he had to give a public indication of his demands, for the benefit of the Government. Moreover, he wanted to demonstrate to the Government that his views were acceptable to the bulk of Congressmen so that the Government would feel that in the event of a settlement being arrived at, the Deshabandhu was in a position to deliver the goods. At that time the Government attached a great value to the Bengal Provincial Conference, because Bengal was then the storm centre and contained some of the most radical elements in the Indian National Congress. Therefore, a proposal which was carried in Bengal, would in all probability be acceptable to Congressmen elsewhere. Deshabandhu Das made a speech which was regarded as rather tame for a Bengal audience. He discussed the question of Dominion Status *versus* Independence as the goal of Congress, and declared that he stood for the former. Moreover, he spoke in condemnation of terrorism. The speech as a whole appeared to be an appeal to the Government and to the more extreme elements among Indians to adopt a compromising attitude so that the ground could be prepared for a settlement. It was, however, not welcomed by the youthful section of the audience and there was a possibility that he would be defeated when the matter was put to the vote. Nevertheless, so great was his personal influence at the time and so transparent his sincerity of purpose that he carried the day. The deliberations of the Faridpur Conference were on the whole satisfactory to the authorities with whom the Deshabandhu was engaged in negotiating.

Soon after this, Lord Reading left India for London, as the Conservative Cabinet and the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, wanted to consult him. By that time it was in the air that negotiations had been going on between Deshabandhu Das and the Government, though hardly anyone knew and details. It was announced that after consulting Lord Reading, Lord Birkenhead would make an important pronouncement about India. Everyone in India awaited his speech with the greatest interest and eagerness.

Then came a sudden bolt from the blue. In June 1925, when Deshabandhu Das having a rest in the hill-station of Darjeeling,

the summer capital of the Bengal Government, he fell seriously ill. After a brief attack he suddenly died. The whole country was at once plunged in grief. He was at the height of his glory and was expected to achieve great things for his country. While *in memoriam* meetings and processions were going on in the country, the British Cabinet in London made up their mind as to what they should do. Their arch-enemy was dead; therefore, things would settle down now for a while, They would accordingly not decide anything in a hurry but would watch developments. But it had already been announced that Lord Birkenhead would make an important pronouncement about India on July 7th, 1925. Therefore, the announcement carefully prepared on behalf of the Cabinet had to entirely suppressed and in its place Lord Birkenhead, on the previously announced date, made an uninteresting speech. Besides talking about platitudes, he merely endorsed Lord Reading's panacca for India's ills in the form of development of industry and the stabilisation of finance.

The death of Deshabandhu on June 16th, 1925, was for India a national calamity of the first magnitude, Though his active political career consisted of barely five years, his rise had been phenomenal. With the reckless adandon of a Vaishnava devotee, he had plunged into the political movement with heart and soul and he had given not only himself but his all in the fight for Swaraj. When he died, whatever worldly possessions he still had, were left to the nation. By the Government he was both feared and admired. They feared his strength, but admired his character. They knew that he was a man of his word. They also know that though he was a hard fighter, he was none the less a clean fighter, and further, he was also the man with whom they could bargain for a settlement. He was clearheaded, his political instinct was sound and unerring and unlike Mahatma he was fully conscious of the role he was to play in Indian politics. He knew, more thn anyone else, that situations favourable for wresting political power from the enemy do not come often and when they do come, they do not last long. While the crisis lasts, a bargain has to be struck. He knew also that to sponsor a settlement, when public enthusiasm is at its height, needs much courage and may involve a certain amount of unpopularily. But he was nothing if not fearless. He was conscious of his exact role, namely that of a practical politician, and he was, therefore,

never afraid of courting unpopularity.

In contrast with the Deshabandha, the role of the Mahatma has not been a clear one. In many ways he is altogether an idealist and a visionary. In other respects, he is an astute politiciam. At times he is as obstinate as a fanatic; on other occasions he is liable to surrender like a child. The instinct, or the judgment, so necessary for political bargaining is lacking in him. Whem there is a real opportunity for a bargain, as in 1921, he is liable to stick out for small things and there by upset all chances of a settlement. Whenever he does go in for a bargain, as we shall see in 1931, he gives more than he takes. On the whole, he in no match in diplomacy for an astute British politician.

After the death of Deshabandhu Das the Mahatma spent several months in Bengal trying to raise a memorial fund in honour of the departed great and helping to reorganise the Congress machinery in the absence of the leader. His public activities, nevertheless, continued on the whole to be non-political in character and the political mantle of the Deshabandhu therefore fell on Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Swarajist leader in the Assembly. While Lord Reading was still in England and Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, was acting as the Governor-General of India, the Pandit attempted to resume the threads of the negotiations which the Deshabandhu had been carrying on with the Government. But the Government in London had already decided to drop the negotiations for the time being and watch developments. Nothing therefore came out of this attempt of Pandit Motilal Nehru.

June 1925 proved to be a turning point in the recent history of India. The disappearance of the towering personality of the Deshabandhu from the political arena was for India a colossal misfortune. The Swaraj Party, which owed so much to him, was paralysed after his death and dissensions gradually arose within the Party. Nevertheless, the Party at the time of his death was an institution of which anyone would be proud. The *Capital* of Calcutta, the organ of British commercial interests, writing after his death, compared the Swaraj Party with the Sinn Fein Party of Ireland and remarked that during forty years of its existence, it had seen nothing like it before. The discipline of the Party, according to the paper, was German in character. The

weakening of the Swaraj Party served to strengthen the forces of reaction in India and in England, while it let loose a flood of communal strife in India which had, up till then, been held back by the superior forces of Nationalism. Today, as we look back on the year 1925, we cannot help feeling that if Providence had spared the Deshabandhu for a few years more, the history of India would probably have taken a different turn. In the affairs of nations, it often happens that the appearance or disappearance of a single personality often means a new chapter in history. Thus, has been the influence of Lenin in Russia, of Mussolini in Italy and of Hitler in Germany in recent world-history.

Notes and References

1. Under the new constitution of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation there was a division of function—the Chief Executive Officer being the head of the administration and the Mayor being the head of the Corporation as a whole. Under the old constitution both these functions were combined in the 'Chairman'.
2. K.P. Chattopadhyaya who has continued to hold office till the present day. At present there are about 40,000 boys and girls in the Municipal Schools.
3. To give expression to this new consciousness, a weekly journal called the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* was started by the Municipality.
4. The drainage scheme which has been adopted now was drawn up by the Indian Chief Engineer, Dr. B.N. Dey.
5. Because of this dual system, the constitution was called 'diarchy'.
6. The Satyagraha campaign went on for several months. The Mohunt ultimately was forced to come to a compromise with Deshabandhu C.R. Das and an agreement was drawn up whereby the temple and the major portion of the property was to be handed over to a public committee. This agreement had to be placed before a court of law but at this stage a third party, under the name of the Brahman Sabha, raised objections. While the whole matter was under Consideration, the Deshabandhu died. After his unfortunate death the agreement was set at nought and the result of the Satyagraha campalish was gillified.
7. This agreement was ratified at the annual session of the Congress held at Belgaum in December, over which Mahatma Gandhi presided.
8. Mr. Anil Baran Roy has since retired from politics and joined the Ashrama of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh at Pondicherry. Mr. S.C. Mitra has since joined the Assembly and been a prominent member of the opposition between 1928 and 1934.

41

C.R. DAS CLIMBS DOWN

M.N. Roy

The budget of 1924-25 came before the Legislative Assembly. Contrary to their repeated pledge to throw out the entire budget as a retaliation against the refusal to grant the national demand, the Swaraj Party only availed themselves of the opportunity for a dramatic political demonstration. The Right parties, frankly and consciously representing the big bourgeoisie, would not go very far with their Swarajist allies. As a formal demonstration, the Swarajists contented themselves with rejecting the first four heads of the revenue side of the budget with a slight majority. The bourgeoise were already disapproving of the futile hysterics of their most most energetic spokesmen—tactics which only prejudiced economic agreement and retarded political peace. In moving the rejection, Motilal Nehru again made some significant remarks. He said : "My present motion has nothing to do with the wrecking or destroying policy of the non-co-operators; and is in effect a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of drawing attention to the grievances of the country." Mark well, "constitutionally and legitimately drawing attention to grievances," and a few months after demanding immediate self-government as an ultimatum ! Quite good progress; only in the wrong direction.

The Finance Bill was also thrown out by a still more diminished majority (of 3). But in the course of the debate Motilal declared that "the Nationalist Party, judging that they have established the principle for which they contended, think it unnecessary to continue the same procedure with regard to subsequent demands." The great bulk of the budget the vital items

was voted by the Assembly. Evidently the Nationalist bourgeoisie had called a halt to their wayward champions. The budget was, of course, passed in its entirety by the Council of State, which also had an Indian majority but composed of "sober and practial" men of business and administrative experience.

In the first session of the Assembly the Swaraj Party scored a "series of parliamentary victories" on subsidiary questions. These were trumpeted to serve the purpose of a smoke screen over the continual retreat on vital points of the Nationalist front. In the official annual "Statement on Moral and Material Progress" of 1923-24, such complimentary comments were made on the behaviour of the Swarajists who, only a few months ago, had been looked upon and denounced as irresponsible trouble makers.

> "It is impossible to deny that the course they followed was in form constitutional. . . . In their treatment of the budget as well as in their conduct during other episodes of the session, the Swarajists must be considered to have played the part of an accredited constitutional opposition (p. 281). . . . So far from indulging in the wholesale programme of obstruction and wreckage upon which they had at one time laid stress, they took a prominent part in the ordinary business of the House (p. 281). . . . "It exemplified the growing tendency towards strictly constitutional action on the part of the Swarajists." (p. 287).

An extraordinary session of the Legislative Assembly convened in May 1924, to consider the Steel Industry (Protection) Bill, presented an amusing but significant scene. The Swarajists, who have posed as the spokesmen of the "dumb millions" and declared their firm determination to obstruct all government measures, voted for an official legislation taxing the masses to gratify the greed of the Indian steel magnates. No less than 5 Swarajist members, including the leader, Motilal Nehru, and even the stormy petrel, V.J. Patel, accepted seats on the Select Committee to consider the Bill and thus willingly co-operated with the government. Patel brought in two mutually incompatible amendments, one ridiculous, the other going still further than the Bill in the advocacy of native capitalism. The first amendment recommended "nationalisation" of the protected steel industry. Nationalisation of industry before the State was nationalised was simply a

ridiculous idea. But the second amendment, in contradistinction to the first, was amazingly business-like. It recommended the application of protection only to those industries having at least two thirds Indian capital. A clause was added to the government bill embodying the principle of the Patel Amendment and a Committee was appointed to report on conditions to be imposed upon the inflow of foreign capital. The demand for nationalisation was, of course, dismissed without much ado. An amendment stipulating for a minimum wage in return for the advantage accruing from protection, failed to receive Swarajist support.

In August 1924, the leader of the Swaraj Party, C.R. Das, made a memorable statement to the press. The statement made by him marked a definite stage in the development of the Swarajist programme. He defined the demand of his party as follows :

> "The first step should be autonomy in all the provinces, with some control in the central government, which at present might consist of a mixed British and Indian Council. But there should be some control in the Legislative Assembly, the extent of which could only be discussed at a round table conference. . . . When a pact is concluded, as it must be soon, between Britain and India, defence arrangements would be part of the pact."

The position could not be made clearer. It is to be remarked that "effective control" of the existing administrative machinery demanded in the election manifesto is reduced to "some control;" and the extent even of the "some control" again remains open to negotiation. In making this statement the Swarajist leader acted as the spokesman, not of the entire Nationalist movement, as he pretended, but exclusively of the native bourgeoisie. The significance of this remarkable willingness for compromise on the part of the apparently most irreconcilable wing of the Nationalist ranks, lies in the fact that it was shown immediately after the fondest desire of native capitalism—protection for the Indian industries—had been actually conceded.

In view of this considerable climb-down as regards the essential political demands, the parliamentary fireworks in the subsequent session of the Legistature could not be taken seriously.

of dyarchy.* The question of the Swarajists' acceptance of Minister-ship arose only in two provinces—Bengal and the Central Provinces—where the Nationalists had a working majority and the Governor, to free the administration from recurring parliamentary crises, prorogued the Legislatare *sine die.* The rest of the provinces, as well as the Central Government, were practically not affected by Swarajist obstruction. Consequently, in the beginning of 1925, the centre of Swarajist politics shifted from Delhi to Calcutta.

Towards the end of March, a number of Moslem Swarajists issued a statement to the press giving it to be understood that C.R. Das was willing to from a Ministry in Bengal Province. The Swarajist leader immediately issued a counter-manifesto in which he declared that he was "willing to co-operate with the Government provided that the conditions were honourable." In the course of the manifesto the Swarajist programme was once more specified in these words : "We are determined to secure Swaraj and political equality for India on terms of equality and honourable partnership in the Empire." Das passionately appealed to the European Community in India not to misunderstand or suspect the Swarajists.

Meanwhile, in the beginning of April, 1925, the Tory Secretary of State for India, Birkenhead, made a speech on Indian conditions, sounding the possibility of an agreement. In a statement issued from Patna on April 3rd, in relation to Birkenhead's speech. Das expressed his agreement with the Secretary of State that "freedom would not be reached by violence," and pointed out the vigorous propaganda he had made against "this standing menace to the establishment of Swaraj." He reiterated that the only guarantee against revolution was an agreement with the Swarajists.

In his manifesto, the Swarajist leader admitted that "a favourable atmosphere has been created for further discussion"; but expressed his inability to go further ahead unless the

*A system of government introduced by the Reforms of 1919, under which the Provincial Administration was split into two parts—one in charge of Indian Ministers responsible to the Legislative Council to the extent that their salary is to be voted by the Legislature; the other in charge of Executive Councillors (Indian and English) independent of the Legislature and responsible only to the Governor,

Government met "us more than half-way on the lines suggested by me." What were those lines? "Provincial autonomy with some controls in the Central Government which at present might consist of the British Viceroy and a mixed British and Indian Council."

The Nationalist bourgeoisie, whose interests the Swarajists had all along been defending, were also calling a halt. Only in the Central Provinces Legislature the Swarajists commanded an independent majority. The Nationalist majority in the Legislative Assembly and in the Bengal Council was based upon the coalition with the Independents. The coalition was breaking down. In the budget debate the Independents had not always voted with the Swarajists, thus sparing the Government further defeats. The Independent leader, Jinnah, on more than one occasion condemned the Swarajist tactics. He said: "I repudiate the Swarajist claim that the poliey of wrecking has the support of the majority of Indians." It was a very ominous repudiation, since Jinnah's close relation with the financial and industrial magnates of Bombay is common knowledge.

After a rather prolonged secret negotiation between the Swarajist leader, Das, and the Governor of Bengal, Lytton, the former agreed to take the responsibility of forming a Nationalist Ministry on the following conditions:

1. Transfer of all departments of the Provincial Government except police to the charge of Indian Ministers;
2. Dyarchy will be worked on that basis until 1929 (when, at the latest, a further advance towards self-government will be due, according to the Government of India Act, 1919);
3. The Governor will undertake to recommend a further instalment of Provincial Autonomy, if the Swarajists administer the ministries satisfactorily;
4. Release of political prisoners;
5. The terms of agreement are to be finally settled at an all-parties' conference to be called by the Government.

The negotiations being secret, neither the Swarajists nor the Government officials stated the conditions. But these were generally known to be the approximate conditions. Later on,

after the death of Das in June 1925, the Swarajists challenged the truth of the rumours about the negotiations; but the speech of Das made in the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur in the beginning of May does not leave room for any doubt that he had agreed to the above conditions. Jndged by the standard of the Faridpur speech, these conditions might be fully acceptable by the Swarajists. Besides, in the midst of the rumpus over the ugly exposure of the secret negotiations, the following admissions were forthcoming from Nehru and Gandhi, both of whom were supposed to be parties to the negotations.

In an interview to the press (quoted in the editorial of "The Bengalee," July 28th, 1925), Gandhi stated :

> "I did not know that what going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandhu (C.R. Das) could be described as negotiations. But some kind of communications were certainly going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandhu through an intermediary. I did not know the actual and verifiable content of those communications, but I knew perhaps the general trend which it is neither profitable nor advisable to disclose."

Motilal Nehru, in a latter (quoted in the editorial of the "Bengalore," August 4th), wrote :

> "Deshbandhu did communicate to me from time to time certain proposals which, he said, he had received from Lord Lytton through a friend . . . I shall always be ready and willing to discuss with the authorities the situation in Bengal as well as in the rest of the country with a view to an honourable settlement. Deshbandhu was expecting a further communication from Lord Lytton on the subject. and should His Excellency be pleased to continue the negotiations with me, I shall only be too glad to put myself at his disposal."

THE FARIDPUR SPEECH

It is not worth while to go further into this episode. The purpose of showing the rapid decline in the Swarajist demand will best be served by a simple perusal of Das' Faridpur speech,

Here there is no secret negotiation to be exposed; no room for denial; no place for doubt. The Faridpur speech was the most official and authoritative statement of the Party's policy. The following are the most characteristic passages of the speech :

> "Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realised within the Empire or outside it. The answer which the Congress has always given is within the Empire, if the Empire will recognise our rights, and outside the Empire if it does not . . . If the Empire furnishes sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred . . . .
>
> "Indeed, the Empire gives us a vivid sense of many advantages, Dominion Status today is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation . . . It is realised that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation and the Dominion Status, while it affords compete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realise itself, develop itself and fulfil itself, and, therefore, it expresses and implies all elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.
>
> "To me the idea is specially attractive because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world peace, in the ultimate federation of the world; and I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilisation, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led with statesmen at the helm, is bound to make lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits the statesman, the problem of knitting the world ino the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race . . . I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the commonwealth, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the commonwealth and so serve the cause of humanity,"

The idea contained in this quotation hardly needs any commentary. The utterance is inspired by the conviction that India can develop—can have "the opportunity of self-realisation, self-development and self-fulfilment"—as a part of and, therefore, under the protection of the British Empire. Mr. Das' love for the Empire might have bewildered many of his trusting followers. But it was not a mere rhetorical extravagance that he indulged in. He spoke with conviction created by facts. Had not India—the India of the bourgeoisie, until now represented by all the Nationalist parties—been accorded ample opportunity for "self-development" within the Empire ? Does not the Empire, in addition, hold out to the same India a guarantee against any revolutionary threat to life and property ?

The considerations contributed to the crystallisation of the "national idea" as expounded by the Swarajist leader. But to the India on whose bent back this structure of "human unity" will be built—to the down-trodden 98 per cent,—this new ideal of Swaraj will fail to be convincing.

Further, while enunciating the methods by which this new ideal of Swaraj was to be realised, C.R. Das categorically ruled out "armed revolution," and called upon the conference to do the same. He appealed :

> "I ask those young men who are addicted to revolutionary methods, do they think that the people will side with them ? When life and property is threatened the inevitable result is that the people who suffer or who think they may suffer recoil from such activities . . . I appeal to the young men of Bengal who may even in their hearts of hearts think in favour of violent methods, to desist from such thought, and I appeal to the Bengal Provincial Conference to declare clearly and unequivocally that in its opinion freedom cannot be achieved by such methods."

The Nationalist movement should shun the path of violent revolution, because that section of the people having something to lose would be against it. Since the methods, without which complete independence cannot be won, are opposed by those having something to risk, the nation must be content with a fake substitute for independence. Still more : a safe and secure corner

in the British Empire should be glorified as something superior to National Independence. The people who have lives to live, and property to be profitted by, will recoil from revolution, actuated by the dictum—a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but what portion of the Indian population is in that fortunate position? On the authority of Mr. Das himself, only two per cent. Is the life of an average Indian worker, an Indian peasant or a member of the Indian lower middle class worth living? Is the precarious property that the latter two might own worth owning? It is not. Life is a drudgery—an endless misery. Property is a myth. It does not stave off starvation. Volumes can be quoted from the writings of the Nationalists themselves to show that the life of the Indian masses is living death. Those who have nothing to lose are not afraid of revolution. On the contrary, revolution is their creation. So, it is the two per cent of the Indian population who, according to Mr. Das, will recoil from revolution, because it may endanger their comfortable life and lucrative property; and in the interests and at the behest of this infinitesimal minority, the only salvation of the overwhelming majority should be tabooed as a sinful method unworthy of the spiritual traditions of India. The Swarajist leader had, indeed, travelled a long way in less than three years. Only in 1922 he declared himself in favour of "Swaraj for the masses—for the 98 per cent."

Now, here the concrete suggestions as regards the conditions for the agreement between imperialism and Nationalism :

> "... the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the common-wealth in the near future, and that in the meantime till Swara. comes, a sure and sufficient foundation is and must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole, but also between the different communities not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities, as I said in my presidential speech at Gaya.
>
> "I must also add that we on our part should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word,

deed or gesture, encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement. This undertaking is not needed, for the Bengal Provincial Conference has never identified itself with the revolutionary propaganda . . . "

It should be noticed that what is demanded is not self-government (not even in a diluted form), but "guarantee for the recognition of our right to Swaraj within the British Commonwealth." The establishment even of this Swaraj will be preceded by time and work to lay the sure and sufficient foundation the nature of which, again, will be determined in the negotiation with the British rulers. The Swarajist leader indentifies himself with the spokesmen of imperialism by making the settlement of communal differences a condition for the establishment of Swaraj. And lastly, the Nationalist bourgoisie is unequivocally committed to the programme of counter-revolution. In other words, in case the Indian masses dare to challenge the suitability of the new ideal of freedom to their conditions, the Nationalist bourgeoisie will willingly join hands with British imperialism to put them back in their place. Then repressive laws and discretionary powers against which the Swarajists have fulminated so much, will become perfectly legitimate."

Still one more quotation from the peroration. The entire philosophy of post-protection Nationalism is restated here :

"I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts, and I think I see a real desire for construction, for consolidation. I believe that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver, and she is anxious to deliver it in the Council Chamber of that great Commonwealth of Nations of which I have spoken. Will British statesman rise to the occasion? To them I say, you can have peace today on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. To the British community in India, I say, you have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to co-operate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognise your right to be heard in the final settlement. To the people of Bengal I say . . . fight

hard, but fight clean; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, entar the peace conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity."

No apology is needed for these lengthy quotations. Their importance cannot be exaggerated. They are conclusive evidence of the social character of Swarajist politics. The Swaraj Party was the party of bourgeis Nationalism in its days of decline, as the inevitable result of the changed economic relation between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. Had the programme of the Swaraj Party reflected anything but the interests of Indian capitalism, it would not come down to this Nadir of moderation. As it is, it had to readjust itself to the changes in its economic background.

42

C.R. DAS IN POONA

N.C. Kelkar

This morning I had the privilege of welcoming Mr. C.R. Das on behalf of the Poona Municipality. Our Municipality is a thoroughly representative body; and so the welcome given by it was really the welcome given by the whole City-population itseif. The welcome I have now the honour to give, in these cherished grounds of the Shivaji Mandir, is against a welcome given by the townsmen of Poona, but in addition to it a welcome also by the people of Mahaıashtra, as represented in the Provincial Congress Committee, and the Tilak Swarajya Sangh.

And I know Mr. Das will like that welcome, because he bears a close kinship to both these bodies in one way or another. As President of the National Congress he is legitimately, if not legally connected with the Provincial Congress Committee, and as for the Tilak Swarajya Sangh, Mr. Das was and is a valued member of the Bengal Branch of that body; which demande Self-Determination for India even before the National Congress.

Mr. Das needs no introduction to you at my hands. In fact it would be impertinent on my part to attempt it, when you have already welcomed him so royally and done him all the honours of a distinguished guest. But even then, I believe, you will like me to say one or two words about him, just because man often likes nothing better than to here an echo of his own voice and his own sentiments. And don't you recognise *your* own voice and sentiments when I say that in Mr. Das, you have for the moment, an all India leader who can be relied upon for finding a way out of

the present political imbroglio, and restoring the lost unity to the nation ?

In thinking of Mr. Das, we have to think of both the man and his mission. As for the man Mr. Das, I think, you all know the progress of his career. In his early days he was a dreamy youth who loved the Muse, and made a mark as a poet and a writer in the Bengali language. Later on, he turned his attention to low as a profession and politics as an occupation of the heart. And while in politics he soon proved himself to be the power behind the throne of Young Bengal, he achieved in the field of law such triumph and earned such emoluments as fall rarely to the lot of the members of the Bar. But Mr. Das excelled *himself* as well as others when he gave up such a lucrative profession, and accepted what may be called the beggar's bowl for the sake of his country.

In Mr. Das Mahatma Gandhi has certainly found an apt pupil and faithful follower in point at least of self-sacrifice, though probably not in point of pouring, organised abuse and censure on the head of the legal profession itself. I hold no brief for the lawyer before this Forum; but I may take this occasion to express my gratification, at the act of bare justice, which Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar and other members of the C.D.E. Committee did, when in their report they recommended, that the All India Congress Committee, should make the *amende honourable* to the deserving lawyer class, which in the past has furnished the back-bone of public life in this country.

Having said this much about Mr. Das the man, let me say one world about the man's mission. And in this respect you will all recognise, that important as the man is by himself, the mission is even more important than the man in this case. It is well-known that Mr. Das has resigned the continuative office of the President of the Congress, and has accepted the modest leadership of a new party within the Congress, He has also expressed his determination to fight for suitable changes in the Non-co-operation programme until the minority in the Congress becomes a majority. Gentlemen, it is not for me to say anythings on the merits of the side Mr. Das occupies in the present controversy. You can from your own judgment in the matter, as Mr. Das also can take care of himself *via-a-vis* his critics. But the critics have done *me* also the honour of mentioning me in the case, and I

would conclude with saying just one world upon that point.

You know perhaps that the *Chronicle* has been recently exteremely troubled to find that through I am an ally of Mr. Das, my position and his in relation to the Councils is not the same. *The Chronicle* has been shedding crocodile tears over the loss of our identity. But don't you think that the anxiety of the *Chronicle* is a little bit suspicious ? For what is it really to the *Chronicle* whether my friend Das and I agree or disagree if the *Chronicle* cannot agree both with Mr. Das and myself? It is cretainly interesting, the knowledge, I mean, of the mathematical minima of psychological differences which separate Mr. Das from myself. But it would be far more interesting to me to know if the *Chronicle* agrees at least with Mr. Das if it cannot agree with myself. In the absence of such agreement, or at any rate the desire to arrive at such agreement, the unpaid and unsolicited illumination supplied by the *Chronicle* must be regarded as sinister and must also, therefore, be rejected.

The difference between Mr. Das's position and mine may perhaps be as big as that between tweedledum and tweedledee; but both of us are, I think, shrewd enough to perceive the real object of our critics in magnifying that difference, and we shall, therefore, simply refuse the kinds invitation to walk into their analytical parlour. I think Mr. Das and I have always been of one mind, and I may at once proclaim to all who pretend to care about our identity, that we shall stand shoulder to shoulder in foul weather as we have done in fair weather before. But I believe the fair weather region has now once more been reached. The cause he and I have espoused is a just cause and a reasonable cause; and you will presently hear from Mr. Das himself how far he agrees and how far he disagrees with me in the present controvesry.

43

APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL FUND

M.K. Gandhi

My capacity for writing original articles on the same subject is strictly limited. I must, therefore, turn to good account the request of the editor to write something on Deshbandhu. I am more concerned with making the best use of the wonderful appreciations that have already appeared than adding one more from me. As heirs to the great legacy left by him, we must deserve it by our action. I gratefully acknowledge the response from hundred of men and women to the memorial fund. But it has got to come from thousands and tens of thousands if we are to reach ten lacs, as we must, within a short time. I hope that those who see these lines will not wait for a call, but will quickly send their subscription—not the least they can, but the best that is possible. They may collect, too, from their friends. Then they need no authority. They can become self-appointed volunteers. Here there is economy of time, maximum of results and minimum of chance of fraud.

I know that people are impatient to attain swaraj. Some think that a hospital as a memorial to Deshabandhu is a poor honour done to the memory of one who gave his life for swaraj. These do not know Deshbandhu. For him every noble deed done by an Indian was a step towards swaraj. Every successful corporate effort is a big step towards swaraj. We must have political power. It cannot long be withheld from us. But that power, whenever it comes, will be the ripe fruit of the labours

of many for a common end. The collection of the fund, especially if it comes from lacs, be it in ever so small a coin, will be a striking demonstration not merely of the genuine love of the people but also of our oranizing ability. To contribute therefore to the fund is for the time being the best appreciation of Deshbandhu.

cannot think that the battle it describes was an actual battle between two armies, and this belief of mine was confirmed when I read the *Mahabharata* in jail. The *Mahabharata* itself seems to me to be a great treatise on dharma. It contains historical incidents, but it is not history. When, for instance, we read about *sarpasatra*, can we rest in its literal meaning ? We should, then, have to swallow enough superstitions to choke us to death. The poet himself has warned us so emphatically, that he is not a historian. The *Gita*, then, describes the conflict within us; it is true that for this purpose it has used some historical incidents, but the aim behind them is to kindle a light in our hearts and impel us to examine them with its help. When you reach the concluding part of Chapter II, it becomes impossible even to suspect that the poem describes a historical battle. It seems strange that Arjuna should want to know the marks of a man firmly established in spiritual vision and that the Lord should explain them to a person all set for a battle.

But what I want to do is to explain to you the meaning of death. If you believe with me that the *Gita* is an allegory, you will also be able to understand the meaning of death as explained in it :

> What is non-Being is never known to have been, and what is Being is never known not to have been. Of both these the secret has been seen by the seers of the truth.

This verse contains the whole meaning. Verse after verse states that the body is *asat*. *Asat* does not mean *maya*,[1] to say that the body is *asat* does not mean that it never came into existence at all; the statement simply means that it is transitory, perishable, that it is subject to change. And yet, we live our life as if it would last for ever. We worship it, we cling to it—all this is contrary to the teaching of Hinduism. If Hinduism has asserted anything in the clearest possible terms, it is that the body and all that we behold is *asat*. But there are probably no other people who fear death and cry and grieve over it as much as we do. In the *Mahabharata*, in fact, it is stated that lamentation after someone's death gives pain to the departed soul, and the *Gita*, too, was composed to remove the fear of death. Man's body wears out through continuous activity and death releases it from suffering. The more I think about the ceaselessly active life of

Deshbandhu, the more I feel that he is alive today. While he lived in the body, he was not fully alive, but he is so today. In our selfishness, we believed that his body was all that mattered, whereas the *Gita* teaches—and I understand the truth of this more clearly as days pass—that all worry about a perishable thing is meaningless, is so much waste of time.

Non-Being simply does not exist, and Being never ceases to exist. Shakespeare was wrong when he said that the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones. The good and the true alone live for ever. The world remembers only those who did some good while they lived in it. It readily forgets that which was false and evil, and preserves only what is good. Take the example of Ramachandra. Personally, I believe him to be an incarnation of God, but I do not believe that he was guilty of no error while he lived in the body. Today, however, we regard him as perfect. Krishna, too, we regard as the plenary incarnation of Godhead. Among the millions of Hindus, you will not find today a single person who will see error in anything which Rama or Krishna did. This fact, too, reveals the meaning of the verse "What is non-Being is never known to have been." The world has preserved only what was imperishable in them, and no one knows anything about the perishable elements—their errors, if they committed any. We want to follow Deshbandhu's example. Is it his life in the body which we should follow as an example ? Was it his body we adored ? If that was so, would his dear, dear son light the fire which consumed it ?

And so, in that verse, the *Gita* declares in the most emphatic language that we should follow truth in our lives and keep away from the unreal and the false, from deception. Very often our words do not express the truth, they become a form of deception. Anger is a form of untruth, desire, attachment, pride; all these are forms of untruth. We have to perform the *satra* of all these snakes. A living snake harms only the body, but these snakes infect every fibre in our being and threaten to harm even the *atman*. This, however, is never harmed. It never dies. If we know what is meant by *sat*, we shall also understand the real meaning of birth and death. The chemists say that when a candle burns nothing is destroyed; similarly, when the body dies and is consumed by fire, nothing is destroyed. Birth and death are two conditions of the

same reality. It is wholly because of our selfishness that we lament the death of our dear one. When on that day I saw the crowds on the cremation-ground and observed no sigh of grief on their faces, for a moment I felt irritated, angry because they seemed to lack sense and did not even understand the gravity of the hour. But a little later I realized that it was they who were right. They had come there not with any selfish motive but merely to honour a noble life, to bear testimony to Deshbandhu's services and express their admiration for the supreme achievement of his life. Their joy had more truth and meaning in it than our grief. All admiration to the reversd Basanti Devi, whom I did not even recognize when I first met her [after Deshbandhu's death], because she shed no tears before me. However, even one's face should not be touched with grief, one should have no feeling of sadness or gloom. Only if we have such a faith can it be said that we have understood the transitoriness of the body. It is not to the body that one is married. In marriage, two souls come together not to seek bodily pleasure but to strive for their own growth and refinement. When the body of one partner disappears, the union becomes all the closer. We have assembled today. therefore, not to shed tears. Let us, rather, think of Deshbandhu's virtues, the substance of his which will never die, and take them into our own lives.

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. Illusion.

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APPEAL REGARDING DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL SERVICE*

M. K. GANDHI

I hope that the public will bear in mind the 1st of July. Those who are organizing the Deshbandhu Memorial Service in Calcutta have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to have three meetings—one a mass meeting in the Maidan, north of Victoria Memorial, another exclusively for ladies at Mirzapur Park, and the third at the Town Hall, where admission would be by tickets. As the functions all over India on the 1st of July are designed to be of a non-party character and as many who did not share Deshbandhu's political opinions have signified their intention of being present at the Memorial Service and of showing from the mass meeting, to hold the meeting at the Town Hall, which can be attended by people belonging to different parties and were suitable speeches can be made. The difficulty that faces the organizers is to choose names for sending tickets of admission to the Town Hall. There is, I understand accommodation in the Town Hall only for 1,200 people. A certain number of seats will necessarily have to be reserved. For the balance, applications should be made to Sj. N.C. Sen at 98, Beltola Road, Bhawanipore. They will be received up to Sunday next. And if the number exceeds the accommodation available, lots will be drawn for deciding upon the names of those who should receive admission cards. I know the prejudice that exists against regulating attendance at such public meetings. But I hope that the public will realize the

*_Amrita Bazar Patrika_, 27-6-1925.

difficulty of the organizers who are anxious to have representative gathering at the Town Hall. It will not be possible to have many or any speeches at the mass meeting. And yet, it will be a pity if those who wish to express their sentiments are not provide with a platform. This can be had at the Town Hall.

I hope, therefore, that the public will heartily co-operate with the organizers in making the Town Hall fuction a success. Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan has kindly consented to preside at the Town Hall meeting.

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ON C.R. DAS

M. K. GANDHI

Friends,

I congratulate Mr. Satyamurti on having presented this portrait to the Mahajana Sabha and I congratulate the Mahajana Sabha upon having secured this very precious possession. If I may do so, I would like to congratulate myself also upon having received the honour of unveiling this portrait. But whilst I prize this honour, I cannot help confessing to you that I am somewhat embarrassed, embarrassed because I am unveiling the portrait of one who unveiled my own. There is some lack of adjustment in this thing. Not that anybody is responsible for this accident; but it is there. Because Deshbandhu unveiled my portrait it was impossible to avoid me, seeing that I happened to be in Madras when the portrait was presented. So it is quite in the fitness of things considered in that light. But all the same, there are things over which we have no control and yet which mar all our dispositions. The fact that I have brought to your notice really mars my joy, it makes it difficult for me to pour out my heart in connection with Deshbandhu Das but I must struggle through my performance in the best manner I can.

I want to lift myself and yourself out of the political setting that has been given to this function. Deshbandhu's name will always be remembered so long as time lasts and India lasts, as one of the liberators of India. There can be not a shadow of doubt

*Speech as Madras on 9 September, 1927.

about it. But Deshbandhu himself claimed and was entitled to far higher honour than that of being ranked as one of the liberators—though high that honour is. I came to know this secret of his life myself during his last days, about which you have just now heard as from his very magnificient letter that Mr. Satyamurti read to us.[1] All his strength was really derived from his spirituality and I consider his spirituality even greater than his politics. He considered that his politics were dependent upon and were derived from his spirituality, as I have said more than once in connection with another liberator of India, now no more, Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak. I think it was in writing about him or speaking about him, I said it had been a misfortune of some of the greatest sons of India to sacrifice their cherished ambition in order to realize what to them was a lesser ambition for the motherland. Lokamanya Tilak, if he had not been born in these times and in India, would have been considered a literary giant but that would not have been enough. He would have been considered a religious scholar, a man capable of giving *smritis* and giving living interpretations of old faiths. But that which was his highest ambition became subservient to the political work that he saw before him and that greatest work became a matter of leisure hours. All the best his energy could possibly give was given to the political emancipation of India. And so it was with Deshbandhu. When I had the honour of making his acquaintance in Lahore, I remember his having engaged me always whenever we had done with the report on which we were both engaged, in spiritual discussions. We used to talk about and think of things of permanent interest in life. I remember his having said once or twice in my presence that he could not possibly do these things in the thorough manner in which he wanted to.

I confess that I did not know Deshbandhu then as I knew him during his last moments at Darjeeling. I came closest to him there and I look back upon those few days of my association with him among the precious treasures of my memory. But in Lahore I unwittingly did an injustice to him by my thinking for one moment that this spirituality of his was a mere pastime as I have known it to be of so many other distinguished sons of India. But as our friendship, may I say, ripened, I came closer to him and I felt that I occupied a little corner in his heart also. And yet there were some cobwebs. God had designed that those cobwebs

should be removed before his eyes were closed. He could not tolerate the idea of a seeker of truth remaining under any illusion whatsoever or any misunderstanding whatsoever in connection with a man so good. I omit the word 'great' deliberately. Greatness without goodness counts for nothing in my estimation as I expect it counted for nothing in Desbandhu's estimation. So I was privileged to enter his heart, understand him through and understand the depth of his devotion.

Reckless sacrifice he had. Reckless courage also he had. But all this beautiful recklessness of his was really derived from his very deep spirituality. He himself told me when he was in Darjeeling that he would not be satisfied and consider his work over unless the spiritual treasures he had locked up in his heart had been also delivered to India. That ambition of his was not destined to be fulfilled through no fault of his. Perhaps you do not know his childlike simplicity. I was amazed; his own partner in life was amazed at that incredible simplicity of his heart. In his search for spiritual consolation he placed himself under one who has and had very little education as we understand the word education. But in order to find that real everlasting peace that a spiritual quickening gives, he was reckless and did not mind ridicule of his friends in going forward with that service. I cannot and dare not give you more details. I have given you just enough to share with me the belief that in Deshbandhu if we have lost a great man, one of the greatest of India's patriots, we have lost also in Deshbandhu a very great spiritual teacher.

I have endeavoured to lift ourselves out of the political setting also because I know that if his spirit is brooding over the proceedings then I know that he shares to the fullest extent the ideas that I am expressing to you. It was another patriot of India, again now no more, who expressed this thought that a time comes in the life of every Indian when mere political battle jars on him and that he seeks to base everything on spiritual, livingly moral foundations. There is no distinction between spirituality and morality, if we rightly understand the latter term. Today somehow or other we have come to distinguish between the two and so I have added the adverb 'livingly' moral. This I heard several years ago; but ever since then, I have seen that utterance more and more exemplified in this manner.

I have introduced this thing for a deliberate purpose; and that

purpose is: Let us have the political ambition that we live for the freedom of the country. Today it is impossible for an Indian worth the name even to exist without political ambition, because the political domination of India has unfortunately resulted in, if not spiritual subjection, in spiritual *inanity*. And we have simply got the outer husk of spirituality; the kernel of it seems to have been entirely dried up. Let us not delude ourselves into the belief that this political ambition of us is going to serve this *Karmabhumi*, this *Devabhumi* as we flatter oursevles in calling Bharatvarsha. Let us not delude ourselves with the belief that this sacred land can ever be served by or can ever assimilate a political message unless it has got a spiritual foundation. It has got to be broadbased upon that foundation if it is to last and permeate the distant villages of India. That brings me to the appeal which the President of the Sabha made to me. I seemed to have neglected politics, he said. But he corrected himself. "No, he did not". I accept that correction. I have not neglected politics. But having had the privilege of sitting side by side with Deshbandhu Das and having had the privilege of many conversations with Lokamanya and most of our leaders. I have understood the secret of achieving India's freedom, as I fancy. In having done so I bide my time in endeavouring to translate politics in terms of spirituality. I must restate my doctrine even at the risk of being misunderstood. When I was challenged I had no hesitation in saying that I would sacrifice India herself on the alter not of freedom but of truth. There is a catch about this thing. The catch consists in this, that freedom which is inconsistent with truth is no freedom whatsoever. But catch or no catch, when I wrote that, I know it jarred on some friends and it incensed some. But what could I do?[2] I can only speak what I feel; or else I should be really worthless. So I have got to repeat really the beautiful language that Deshbandhu uttered on that occasion which was reproduced today, namely, that althogh he had boundless affection for me, he could only do what his soul could ascend to and not when I wished or asked.[3] And no man can do more. I cannot do more—I know that. When my soul ascends to things which you are in the habit of calling political, I shall not wait for an invitation; and I shall lead the cause. But till then, I must be content to contemplate on the treasures that have been left to us by Deshbandhu and his predecessors—spiritual treasures—and must continue to hold the belief that all the politics that may have

been handed down to us from the West will be turned to dust in India, good as they might be in the West, if we cannot possibly reduce them to terms of spirituality.

And I consider it a great privilege for me that as my stay in Madras is about to close, I have not only got this privilege of unveiling the portrait of one whose memory I hold dear and near to me, but that I have also in that connection got the privilege of interpreting as I know the mission for which Deshbandhu lived.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 The concluding paragraph of this letter of April 19, 1925 read ; "No. my dear Satyamurti, I feel a broken man. I feel that my work is over and somebody is constantly calling me from the other side. I should love now to given up all this fight and worry and retire to seclusion. Surely the last few year—may be a very few—should be given to God. The work should be taken up by younger men—yours affectionately, C.R. Das."

2. Presumably the *Young India* passage reproduced in Vol. XXXII, p. 587.

3. While unveiling a portrait of Gandhiji in the same Hall, C.R. Das had said: "I followed Mahatma Gandhi because my soul ascend to his. But I shall refuse to agree to anything which my soul does not ascended to. I have the highest respect, nay veneration, for the Mahatma; but I shall never trample my soul under my foot. The Mahatma knew that and I believe he respected me for that."

47

THE SCIENCE OF SURRENDER AND DESHBANDHU

M.K. GANDHI

"To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. When a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left."

Exception has been taken to my remarks at a meeting in Calcutta that Deshabandhu in his relations with the Mussalmans brought 'the science of surrender to perfection.' The exception has been taken because my critics impute to me the implication that by surrender I mean that Deshabandhu conferred on Mussalmans favours, that is, things they were not entitled to. The critics opine that the Hindus are acting towards the Mussalmans much the same as Englishmen are acting towards us all, having first taken away everything and then offering us doles in the name of favours.

I know what I said at the meeting in question. I have not read the reports of my speech, but I desire to abide by all I said at that meeting. I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And

yet it is always less than he wishes to give, because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. It is libellous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen. Hindus cannot even if they would, and this I say in spite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers, have to be, whether they will or no. Every act, therefore, of a Hindu towards the Mussalman and *vise versa* must be an act of surrender and not mere justice. They may not weight their acts in golden scales and exact consideration. Each has to regard himself ever a debtor of the other. By justice, why should not a Mussalman kill a cow every day in front of me? But his love for me restrains him from so doing, and he goes out of his way sometimes even to refrain from eating beef for his love of me, and yet thinks that he has done only just what is right. Justice permits me to shout my music in the ear of Maulana Mahomed Ali when he is at prayer, but I go out of my way to anticipate his feelings and make my talks whispers whilst he is praying and still consider that I have conferred no favour of the Maulana. On the other hand, I should become a loathsome creature if I exercised my just right of playing tomtom precisely at the time of his prayer. Justice might have been satisfied if Deshabandhu Das had not filled certain posts with Mussalmans, but he went out of his way to anticipate Mussalman wishes and placate Mussalman sentiment. It was his sensitiveness to placate them that hastened his death. For I know what a shock it was to him to learn that law, i.e., justice would compel him to disinter certain remains buried in unauthorized ground and he was trying to find out means of avoiding any the slightest office to Muslim sentiment even though it may be unreasonable. This was going out of the way—not his way, but the way of the world. And yet he never considered that he was conferring any favour on the Mussalmans by delicately considering their feelings. Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself.

This talk, therefore, of justice and nothing but justice is a thoughtless, angry and ignorant outburst whether it comes from Hindus or Mussalmans. So long as Hindus and Mussalmans continue to prate about justice, they will never come together.

'Might is right' is the last word of 'justice and nothing but justice.' Why should Englishmen surrender an inch of what they have earned by right of conquest ? Or, why should Indians, when they come to power, not make the English disgorge everything which their ancestors robbed them of ? And yet when we come to a settlement, as we shall some day, we will not weigh in the scales of justice so-called, but we shall introduce into the calculation the disturbing factor of surrender otherwise called love or affection or fellow-feeling. And so will it be with us, Hindus and Mussalmans, when we have sufficiently broken one blood and realized our foolishness. The scales will then fall off our eyes and we shall recognize that vengeance was not the law of friendship; not justice but surrender and nothing but surrender was the law of friendship. Hindus will have to learn to bear the sight of cow-slaughter, and the Mussalmans will have to discover that it was against the law of Islam to kill a cow in order to wound the susceptibilities of Hindus. When that happy day arrives, we shall know only each other's virtues. Our vices will not obtrude themselves upon our gaze. That day may be far off or it may be very near. I feel it coming soon. I shall work for that end no other.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add by way of caution that my surrender does not mean surrender of principle. I made the point clear at the meeting and I with to emphasize it here once more. But what we are just now fighting for is not any principle at all, but vanity and prejudice. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

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SOME MEMORIES

M.K. GANDHI

The rock-like Deshbandhu having fallen, the newspapers are full of him. They are even ready to give the smallest details about him. *Servant* has brought out a special issue. *Vasumate*, Bengal's newspaper with the largest circulation, is also preparing to bring out a special issue. Smt. Basanti Devi has received more than a thousand telegrams, and more are pouring in from distant countries. Meetings are being held everywhere. There was hardly any village under Congress influence which did not hold a meeting.

On the 18th, Calcutta was swept by a wave of emotion. Statisticians estimate that not less than two lakhs must have assembled. Men and women stood on the roads, climed the electric poles and perched on roots of trams, not to mention the men and women waiting on balconies to catch a glimpse [of the procession].

There were *bhajans* and *kirtans*, it goes without saying. People rained flowers. Deshbandhu's body had been kept open to view. but it lay buried under a mountain of flowers.

At the head of the procession were volunteers, carrying a *fulwari*, in which was kept a spinning-wheel decorated with flowers. The procession started from the station at 7.30 [a.m.] and reached the burning-ground at 3 [p.m,]. The cremation began at 3.30.

There were swarming crowds on the burning-ground. It

was very difficult to check the crowds pressing from behind. I think that, had not some strong persons lifted me up on their shoulders and placed me in front of the crowd pressing forward, something terrible might have happened. Two or three strong men held me up by turns on their shoulders and from that position I struggled to cheek the surging crowd and went on entreating them to sit down. They would comply as long as they could see me, but they took me from spot to spot where there was fear of disturbance and, as soon as my back was turned, the crowd would stand up. The people had lost their senses. Thousands of eyes were fixed on the bier. As the pyre was lit, the people lost all self-control. Involuntarily, the whole crowd stood up and pressed towards the pyer. It was feared that, in a moment, people would be falling on the pyre. What was to be done ? I told the people : "Now it is all over, please go back to your homes." I then told the man who was carrying me to take me out of the crowd. I kept on telling the people, suggesting by signs and shouting at them loudly that they should follow me. This succeeded very well with the crowd of thousands and we were saved from a grave danger. The pyre was made up entirely of sandalwood.

It looked as if people had come for a picnic. There was seriousness on their faces, but they did not seem to be distressed. The grief of relatives and of persons like me seemed selfish. My philosophy was found wanting but the people's had remained unaffected because they were unttached. They were filled with the highest respect [for Deshbandhu], but their devotion had no element of selfishness in it. They had come there to testify to the greatness of a son of the country, of their brother. They seemed to say with their eyes and their movements, "Well done ! May these be a thousand other like you."

Deshbandhu was as kind as he was noble. I realized this fully in Darjeeling. He talked about religion, about the things which had impressed him most. He was very keen on having direct spiritual experience. "Whatever may be true about other countries, in this country only the path of non-violence can save us. I will show the young men of Bengal that we can win swaraj by non-violent means." "If we are good, we can make the British Good." "In this atmosphere of darkness and hypocrisy, I can see no way except that of truth. Nor do we need any

other." "I wish to bring together all the parties, The only obstacle is the timidity of our people. In trying to bring them together, we run the risk of becoming timid ourselves." "You should try to bring all of them together, and ask him what he gains by abusing the Swaraj Party in your presence. He may point out to me any error or wrong I may have been guilty of. If I do not satisfy him, then he may abuse me to his heart's content." "I am daily growing more convinced about your spinning-wheel. If my shoulder did not ache and if I were not such a bad pupil in spinning, I would have learnt it sooner. Once I have learnt it, I would not find it boring to do it every day. But I am bored when I try to learn it. See how the thread snaps again and again." "But how can you say that ? Is there anything you will not do for swaraj ?" ',That is true of course. It is not that I refuse to learn. Only, I point out to you my difficulties. Ask Basanti Devi how bad I am at such things." Basanti Devi agreed : "That is true. If he wants to open his box, I have to come to turn the key". I said : "That is your cleverness. In this way you have made him helpless, so that he will have always to flatter you and be dependent on you." The room was filled with laughter. Deshbandhu intervened : "You may examine me after a month. I shall not be drawing ropes then." "All right.", I said, "Satish Babu will even send a teacher for you. If you pass [the test], take it that swaraj is at hand." There are so many pleasant incidents like this that, if I tried to describe all of them, I should never end.

There are some memories which I simply cannot narrate.

I would be ungrateful if I did not try to give some description of the love I had been receiving at [Darjeeling]. He took personal interest in the smallest matters. He would himself order dry fruits from Calcutta. As it would be difficult to secure goats or goats' milk in Darjeeling, he had got five from the plains and kept them where he was staying. He would not let me manage without any of the things to which I was used, There was only a wall between our two rooms. Every morning, he would wait for me as soon as he was free. He would be in bed, for he could not leave it, He knew my manner of sitting cross-legged, and so would not let me sit on the chair, but would make me sit on his bed facing him. He would get some more mattresses spread and also have cushions placed for me, I could not help joking : "This scene reminds me

of a day forty years' ago when I got married, the bride and I sat like this on a plank. All that remains is holding each other's hands." I had hardly finished this when the whole house rang with Deshbandu's laughter. Whenever he laughed, the sound of his laughter could be heard from a great distance.

Deshbandhu was daily becoming gentler. Custom did not forbid him meat or fish. But when the non-co-operation movement started he gave up meat eating, drinking and smoking, all three. Later these things came back, but his inclination was always for giving them up. Recently, again, he had come into contact with a *sadhu* of the Radhaswami sect and after that his eagerness to adopt vegetarian food had increased. When, therefore, I visited him at Darjeeling, he again started the experiment of vegetarian diet, and while I was there, he did not allow meat and fish in the house. He told me several times : If I can manage, I will never eat meat or fish now. I do not like eating them, and I realize that they obstruct our spiritual growth. My *guru* was very particular about this matter and told me that, in the interest of the spiritual effort I have undertaken, I must give up meat-eating."

49

LONG LIVE DESHBANDHU !

M.K. GANDHI

I had the good fortune of being in Bombay when the Lokamanya passed away. Province favoured me also on the day when Deshbandhu was cremated, or, rather, Fate seemed to have waited for the first lap of my tour to be over, for had the cremation taken place one day earlier, I would not have been able to witness the scene which I did in Calcutta.

Just as the citizens of Bombay had abandoned themselves to grief on the day of the Lokamanya's death, so did the people of Calcutta on this day. At that time, countless men and women had come out to have *darshan*, to weep and express their love. Now, as then, there was no community or race whose members were not present to honour the departed. When the train arrived at the station, there was not an inch of space on the platform. People vied with one another for the bonour of carrying Deshbandhu's bier, as they had for the Lokamanya's.

On both these occasions, it was the people's rule. The crowds were not ruled by the police, but the latter of their own free will were ruled by the people. The authority of the Government was voluntarily suspended and the people's rule was in force. On that day, people did what they chose. What Deshbandhu wanted to see people doing when he was alive, they did on the day of his leaving this world for the next.

Is this an object-lesson of small value ? Is there anything which the bond of love will not make people do ? On that day, they "endured hardships, bore hunger and thirst, cold and heat",

and did it cheerfully. It was not necessary to plead with them and persuade them to suffer what they did.

No such crowds collect on the death of an emperor. People do not notice the death of a sannyasi, nor do newspapers and news agencies. Urged by what sense of duty, then, had the old and the young, men and women, the rich and the poor, Hindus and Muslims gathered there, uninvited, in the twinkling of an eye ? It was their sense of duty to the nation. People will in these days describe only those who do this duty as men imbued with the spirit of dharma. They are even ready to forget the weaknesses of those who follow this dharma. There is some meaning in this. People are not foolish in acting thus. God alone is perfect. Every human being is liable to err. If, however, any person does his own proper duty to the best of his ability, his weaknesses will not be noticed and, as he goes on doing his duty, they will ultimately disappear.

National service is the only dharma today, for unless we follow that we can follow no other. The power of the State has penetrated every aspect of national life. In countries where the power of the State is the power of the people, the subjects are happy on the whole, and where the State is hostile to the people, the latter are miserable and utterly weak. In such countries the people lead a sinful life and call it good, for those who live in fear are incapable of goodness. To free ourselves from this paralysing fear, i.e., to learn the first lesson in self-realisation, is what we call the dharma of national service. What have our patriotic leaders been teaching us ? That we should not fear even a king, that we are men and need fear God alone. Neither King George V nor his representatives can inspire fear in them. The Lokamanya had abandoned all fear of the State's machinery of law and order and, therefore, he was the adored of the people, even of learned men, for he inspired them with courage. Deshbandhu had also completely shed fear of the Government. To his mind, the Viceroy and the gate-keeper were equal. He had seen with his inner eye that, everything considered, there was no difference between the two. If it is unmanly to fear the Viceroy, so is it to try to overcome the gate-keeper. There is a profound spiritual vision behind this attitude, and that is the meaning of the dharma of national service. For this reason, consciously or unconsciously and even against

their will, people look with reverence upon those who follow this dharma. The Lokamanya was a Brahmin. His knowledge of the scriptures was such as humbled the pride of pundits. But he was not adored for that knowledge of his. Deshbandhu did not a Brahmin. He was a Vaisya. But people never thought about what caste he belonged to. Deshbandhu did not know Sanskrit and had not studied the scriptures. He merely followed the dharma of national service. He had made himself completely fearless. That is why even learned men bowed to him and, on that unforgetable day, they mingled their tears with the people's. The dharma of national service means all-embracing love. It is not universal love, but it is an important face of it. It is not the Dhavalgiri of love, but its Darjeeling. From Darjeeling, the visitor has a golden vision of Dhavalgiri and thinks to himself: 'If the Darjeeling of love is so beautiful as this, how much more beautiful must be its Dhavalgiri, which shines in the distance before me.' Love of one's country is not opposed to love of mankind, but is a concrete instance of it. It is ultimately lifts one to the highest peak of universal love. That is why people shower blessings on those who are filled with patriotic love. People know love of family, and are not, therefore, moved to admiration by it. To some extent they also understand love of the village. But love of the country only a Deshbandhu or a Lokamanya understands. People adore such men because they themselves want to be like them.

Deshbandhu's liberality know no restraints. He earned lakhs and spent laks. He never refused to give, even borrowed and gave. He fought for the poor in courts without charging any fees. It is said that in Aurobindo Ghosh's case he exhausted himself and his resources for nine months. He spent from his own pocket and did not charge a single pie. This large-heartedness, too, was the result of his patriotism.

If he opposed me, it was certainly not that he wanted to harass me or undermine my position; he did so only far the sake of national service. He, who did not fear the Viceroy, was not likely to be afraid of me. His attitude was that if the activities of even his brother obstructed the progress of the country, he would oppose him. This should be the attitude of all of us. Our differences were like the differences between brothers. Neither of us wanted to part company with the other for ever,

If we did, we would have shown ourselves wanting in patriotism. Hence, even when we seemed to drift away from each other, we were drawing closer. Our situation was a test of the quality of our hearts. Deshbandhu has passed that test, but I have still to show that I have passed it. I must keep undiminished my love for Deshbandhu and for other co-workers. If I fail in that, I shall have failed in the test.

Deshbandhu's progress, during the last three or four months of his life was marvellous. Many must have had experience of his hot temper. His gentleness of which I had experience at Faridpur went on increasing. The Faridpur speech was not written without due thought. It was a beautiful flower of mature thought. I observed him making progress even beyond that point. In Darjeeling, he had reached the fullest limit on this new direction. I never weary of describing my experiences during those five days. Everything that he did and said seemed to breathe love. His optimism was becoming stronger. He could be caustic about his enemies but I found no evidence of this during those five days. In fact he spoke about many of them but I found no bitter word in anything he said. Sir Surendranath's opposition had remained unchanged, but even for him Deshbandhu had nothing but regard. He wanted to win over Sir Surrendranath's heart. He wished that I, too, should try to do that. His advice was : "Try to win over as many as you can."

We talked at great length about how to carry on the struggle henceforward, what the Swaraj Party should do and what place the spinning-wheel occupied in the programme. We also drew up a plan of work for Bengal. That may even be put into execution. But where are the men to carry it out ?

I left Darjeeling with a light heart. My fears and disappeared. I could see my path clearly before me—the path of swaraj. But now the horizon is overcast with clouds. I was in a fright when the Lokamanya passed away. So far I had to plead only with one, but from now on, I thought, I would have to plead with many. I could explain my problems to him and seek his help to solve them. Instead, I would now have to discuss them with several leaders, and even then, I knew, they would not be able to solve them. The time had come when I had to wipe their tears.

The passing away of Deshbandhu has left me in greater difficulties. Deshbandhu meant Bengal. His consent was as good

as a draft in my hand which I could cash without further difficulty. So far, my difficulties at the passing of Deshbandhn are similar to those at the passing away of the Lokamanya. But when the latter died, the path before us was clear. People had been filled with new hopes. They wanted to try their strength and make new experiments. Hindus and Muslims seemed to have become united.

But what is the position now ? The sky overhead and the earth below. I have no fresh ideas to put forward. Hindus and Muslims are getting ready to fight each other. In the name of religion, they seem to have forgotten the dharma of national service. Brahmins and non-Brahmins are also fighting with each other. The Government believes that it can now do what it likes in the country. Civil disobedience seems to be far away. At this time, one would feel the passing of any great soldier, but that of Das with his ten hands is a loss impossible to bear.

However, I believe in God and, therefore, have not lost heart. God may sport with us as He wills. Why should we be miserable or happy because of anything He may do ? Why should it make any difference to us if events over which we have no control end in one way rather than in another ? I understand my duty. Maybe my understanding of it is wrong, but so long as I am convinced that it is my duty I should do it, and when I have done it my responsibility is over. I console myself with such attempts at philosophical reflection. My selfishness simply does not let me forget that I shall see Deshbandhu no more.

But how can Deshbandhu die ? His physical frame has passed away. But can his virtues die ? They still live. If we but cultivate them in ourselves, he lives in all of us. One who has served the world can never die. It is wrong to say that Rama and Krishna have left this world. Both live in the hearts of the thousands of their devotees. The same is true of Harischandra and others. By Harishchandra we do not mean his physical body; we mean truth. He still lives in countries Harischandra who serve truth. So does Deshbandhu. His moral body has perished. His spirit of service. his liberality, his love of the country, his self-sacrifice, his fearlessness—can we say that these, too, have perished ? They will go on increasing in strength among the people, whether in greater or smaller measure.

And so Deshbandhu lives, though dead. As long as India lives, Deshbandhu lives. Let us, therefore, say, "Long live Deshbandhu !"

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THE STORMY PETREL OF INDIAN POLITICS

VERINDER GROVER*

Chittaranjan Das, who was lovingly called "Deshbandhu" (friend of the country), took an active part in politics for only eight years—no doubt, a brief period—but it was the most critical and momentous period in the history of the world. After World War I there was a basic change in the vision regarding all aspects of human activity. There was struggle for liberty and freedom the world over, and India also found itself involved in this great cataclysm. The impact of freedom movement on Chittaranjan was great. He advocated freedom of religion, freedom from social bondage of caste and freedom of thought and discussion. The emerging trend in politics was that the Indians should be associated with the process of law-making and they should have greater share in administrative services. The political aspirations of the educated Indians were voiced by the Indian National Congress.

Chittaranjan abhorred petititioning the Moderates employed for political advance of India. The revolutionary movement, which had its origin in Maharashtra, appealed to him. So when in the wake of the Swadeshi movement, B.C. Pal enunciated the *triple doctrine of Swadeshi, Swaraj and Boycott* as weapons of the agitation against the partition of Bengal, Chittaranjan appreciated such a move. But except for helping financially the progressive movements, Chittaranjan kept himself busy with the legal practice.

Chittaranjan's active participation in politics started with the

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emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the political horizon of India. Gandhiji's call for action against the Rowlatt Bill appealed to him. However, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre influenced Chittaranjan so much that he plunged himself into active politics. From that time onwards he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the service of the motherland.

In 1918, he was appointed a member of the Congress Enquiry Committee on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. At the meetings of the committee he proved to be the most active and dynamic personality. At the Amritsar sesssion of the Indian National Congress (1919) he moved a resolution declaring that Montford Reforms "were inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing". That he was a stormy petrel of the Indian politics was evidenced at the special session of the Congress in Calcutta (September, 1920), where he vehemently opposed the non-cooperation resolution moved by Mahatma Gandhi. In opposing the resolution he was wholeheartedly supported by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, B.C Pal and Annie Besant. But inspite of this, the resolution was carried after an open and free discussion. In December, 1920 Chittaranjan had gone to the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress with the avowed aim of opposing the ratification of the resolution on non-violent non-cooperation. But he was so much influenced by the charisma of Gandhiji that he himself moved the resolution. Now he identified himself fully with the movement and his activities became a source of inspiration to other leaders of the Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi suspended the non-cooperation movement in 1922 as a sequel to the Chouri Chaura incident and instead asked his followers to concentrate on spinning, communal unity and social service. This led to frustration among a large number of even his committed followers. But Chittaranjan had the great courage to present to the country an alternative programme of council-entry. His aim was to carry the campaign of non-cooperation into the councils, which constituted the citadel of foreign rulers, with a view to storming the citadel and to break it. Though Gandhiji and the "non-changers" opposed the scheme vehemently yet Chittaranjan got his "council-entry" programme approved by the Congress.

As a true Congressman, Chittaranjan also believed firmly in Hindu-Muslim unity. After the collapse of the non-co-operation

movement, relations between Hindus and Muslims became strained. The question of communal unity exercised the minds of the leaders. At the Coconada Congress, at the instance of Chittaranjan, the Bengal Pact was agreed upon which brought both the communities of Bengal on a common platform. A very few Hindu leaders of that time had realised the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity which was the *sine qua non* of Indian freedom.

Chittaranjan's contribution to the development of India's relations with other countries was also significant. He criticised the policy of "exclusiveness" and wanted the Indian National Congress to establish its offices in the capitals of important countries and he asserted : "We must keep ourselves in touch with world movements and be in constant communication with the lovers of freedom the world over." Favouring the formation of an Asiatic Federation, he opined : "Our freedom must be won by ourselves, but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world is destined to bring about world peace."[1]

Chittaranjan's political career, though short, had a meteoric rise. He shot into fame all over the country by dint of his patriotism, sincerity and enchanting oratorial power. In a matter of eight short years, from 1917 to 1925, he attained dizzy heights which very few leaders have attained.

Chittaranjan, one of the greatest man that India has seen in modern times—great in charity and munificence, great in erudition and culture, great in his legal acumen and juridical knowledge and great in his love for the motherland. His greatness also lay in the fact that even during the ascendancy of Gandhiji as a leader he succeeded in making a distinctive contribution of his own and thus carved for himself an honourable niche in the gallery of political notables.

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